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TANZANIA

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Minziro Nature Reserve shows African Golden Cat for first time in Tanzania

By Special Correspondent Francesco Rovero

A camera trap has caught the first ever record of an African Golden Cat in Tanzania. This species, about two times the size of a domestic cat, is the only truly forest-dependent cat in Africa and is already classed as vulnerable - one step away from being endangered.

This finding took place in Minziro Nature Reserve, established in 2016 by the Tanzania Forest Services with the support of a whole team of partners



We hope it will serve to trigger further research and, most critically, greater protection of the nature reserve, which is newly established

including UNEP-WCMC chief scientist Neil Burgess.

The reserve's rainforest habitat is quite rare in East Africa, as it represents an eastern 'outlier' of a forest habitat type otherwise found in central and western Africa.

As such it holds quite a unique combination of species for Tanzania, among them the tree pangolin and giant pangolin along with an impressive array of primates, all rarely found elsewhere in the country.

An international team of researchers coordinated by Italy's MUSE (Trento Science Museum with the University of Florence) and Tanzania's College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka in Kilimanjaro Region and implemented in close coordination with the Tanzania Forest Service, set out to conduct an assessment of the rainforest's wildlife and placed 65 camera traps around over 100 square kilometres in the reserve.

Over the next few months these camera traps spotted several of these African Golden Cats in different places around the reserve, displaying their whole range

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JPM irked by bribes, deceit in Bagamoyo port project



President John Magufuli addresses members of the business community from districts across the country as well as Tanzania National Business Council members at State House in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: State House.

'Harmonise regulatory bodies and relax tax administration'

By Henry Mangonde

BUSINESSPEOPLE from across the country yesterday outlined a number of state-sanctioned bottlenecks that make doing business in the country difficult, appealing to the government to take immediate measures to reverse the situation.

Speaking during a meeting with President John Magufuli at State House



I have been a member of Parliament for a long time and one of the ministries which have been failing us is this ministry. An example is the Institute of Agriculture at Uyole in Mbeya

in Dar es Salaam, representatives of the business community from all districts in Tanzania Mainland mentioned the multiplicity of regulatory institutions and an unfriendly, rigid tax regime applied by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) as chief among their grievances.

Chrysanti Mzindakaya, who owns a

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We cannot allow a project with such terms. I know there was compensation which was paid but if you follow up, you will find that those who received the money were not Bagamoyo residents. They were all from Dar es Salaam

We have worked very hard as a country to let the Tanzania-Uganda oil pipeline pass through our country

By Henry Mwangonde

RESIDENT John Magufuli yesterday revealed why his government foiled the much-touted new Bagamoyo port project, saying it was a looters' den shrouded in grand corruption and its terms were not for the benefit of the country.

Speaking to businesspeople from across the country at State House in Dar es Salaam, the Head of State said the majority of supposed Bagamoyo residents who were paid billions in compensation were tricksters based in the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam.

The president's statement ended raging



We cannot allow a project with such terms. I know there was compensation which was paid but if you follow up, you will find that those who received the money were not Bagamoyo residents. They were all from Dar es Salaam

debate on the much-awaited project whose foundation stone was laid by former president Jakaya Kikwete in 2015.

"We cannot allow a project with such terms. I know there was compensation which was paid but if you follow up, you will find that those who received the money were not Bagamoyo residents. They were all from Dar es Salaam," he said.

The president said the project terms require that the government should not develop any of its other ports and should not have a say in its operations for 99 years.

Expressing his sentiments, the Head of State said the government was investing a lot of money in various ports such as Mtwara and Tanga to open up the country, so it was ridiculous for an investor to bring up such terms.

"We have worked very hard as a country to let the Tanzania-Uganda oil pipeline pass through the country and that is the

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Man is convicted of operating unregistered YouTube account

By Guardian Reporter

DAR ES SALAAM'S Kisumu Resident Magistrate's Court yesterday sentenced a man to one-year imprisonment or a 5m/- fine by after finding him guilty of operating an unregistered YouTube account.

Resident Magistrate Maira Kasonde found John Chuwa (28) of Tabata Barracuda in Dar es Salaam guilty of opening and operating the account with neither registration nor



licence from the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA).

The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2019 stipulate that bloggers must register and pay over USD900 per year to conduct their business.

State Attorney Elizabeth Mkunde told the court that between various dates in 2018 and April 2019, Chuwa opened and operated an unregistered online content distribution

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Man is convicted of operating unregistered YouTube account

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channel which he used to broadcast news on the Tanzanian film industry known as Bongo Movies.

Mkunde described to the court that the gadgets Chuwa used to upload materials and interact with audiences were two mobile smartphones.

The magistrate handed down the sentence after being satisfied that Chuwa indeed committed the offence to which, according to the court, the accused confessed.

When given an opportunity defend himself before sentencing, Chuwa pleaded for leniency, saying that he was the sole bread winner in his family and fended for his sick mother and two young siblings.

By the time the court session came to an end, Chuwa had managed to pay the fine and escaped going to jail.

The High Court sitting in Mtwara on May 4, 2018 issued a temporary injunction preventing the implementation of the regulations, including the registration of all online platforms whose deadline was set for May 5, last year.

The petitioners came from the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA), Jamii Media, Tanzania Human Rights Defenders (THRD) and Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF).

But the State made a successful case in defence of the law and the petition was thrown out in a ruling delivered in May last year.

Another law detested by activists is the Cybercrimes Act, passed in 2015, whose opponents say has played a significant role in stifling dissent in the country. In 2015 and 2016 alone, at least 14 Tanzanians were arrested and prosecuted under the law for insulting President John Magufuli on social media.



Members of focal team formed to work on challengers facing members of the Malawian business community transporting their cargo through Dar es Salaam Port inspect Malawi Cargo Centre dry port infrastructure in Mbeya yesterday. They underlined the need to minimise the number of days they spend relying on Tanzania Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) wagons. The team was constituted by the Tanzania Ports Authority and has members from, among other institutions, the Tanzania Revenue Authority, TAZARA, Tanzania Freight Forwarders Association and Tanzania International Container Terminal Services. Photo: Correspondent Iddy Mwema

'Harmonise regulatory bodies and relax tax administration'

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beef industry said there is still bureaucracy especially in the Ministry of Agriculture as they have been contacting and writing to it without response.

"I have been a Member of Parliament for a long time and one of the ministries which have been failing us is this ministry. An example is the Institute of Agriculture at Uyole in Mbeya," he said.

Mzindakaya said currently there are no indicative prices for maize

cereal crops in Mbeya and Rukwa, such that the whole buying process is wrapped in politics.

Francis Noni, a businessman from Tabora said the agriculture sector has been very low, while officials of the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) estimate taxes that are not friendly to business people.

Emmanuel Soko, an investor in the education sector gave an example where he was charged 100,000/- and this year he has been charged 200,000/- on the same business.

A businessman from Shinyanga region, Giritu Madura said taxes

are estimated on daily transactions rather than the profits made.

In his response President Magufuli pointed out a number of issues that are derailing efforts to improve the business environment, and vowed to address the challenges.

The Head of State took a swipe at state institutions and the business community as well for creating an unfavorable doing business climate.

Dr Magufuli said the existence of excessively complicated administrative procedures in the government was one of the factors that discourage the sustainable

growth of business activities.

"Bureaucracy in the government makes it difficult for the business environment to improve and this has to be addressed by us all," he said.

He condemned the tendency of some local government authorities to introduce new taxes without prior consultations with the central government.

He expressed his disappointment that despite the government's efforts to end corruption, there are still some government officials embracing it.

"I am aware there are some government officials at (TRA), Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) and other authorities who demand and receive bribes from traders. May you please name them here," the president appealed.

Dr Magufuli assured the business people that his government was committed to empower SMEs.

"Failure to empower them does not only affect them but also denies the government sufficient revenues," he said.

He further criticized financial institutions for their failure to issue

soft loans to small scale business people.

Further referring to the current business climate, he accused some business people of tax evasion and corruption.

Dr Magufuli also took on the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) for its failure to empower traders, further reiterating his government's commitment to improving the business environment and at the same time appealing for transparency and accountability.



A Dar es Salaam resident wades through sewage and muddy water across the Kigogo section of Msimbazi River yesterday, exposing his health to serious danger. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

JPM irked by bribes, deceit in Bagamoyo port project

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main reason we are expanding the port of Tanga to ensure that the entire product goes through that channel," he said.

Last month, National

Assembly Speaker Job Ndogai asked the government to explain why the construction of the Bagamoyo mega port in Coast Region was stalled despite signing an accord with a Chinese contractor.

The Bagamoyo project framework agreement was signed on March 24, 2013 with intent to enhance competition along the East African coast and supplement the ports of Dar es Salaam, Tanga and Mtwara.

Ndogai was forced to seek explanation from the government after several MPs queried stalling of the multibillion dollar project.

The project, which was well pronounced during the final years of former President

Kikwete, was initially signed in 2013 during a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Since then, there has been a change of focus with most efforts being directed towards rehabilitation of ports of the other three coastal ports.

Minziro nature reserve shows African Golden Cat for first time in Tanzania

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of colouration - from intense orange to dark black.

Francesco Rovero, researcher at the Department of Biology at the University of Florence and collaborator with MUSE, said: "We are still finishing up our data analyses (there were almost 6,000 images depicting more than 25 species of mammals), but this one finding alone highlights how unique Minziro Nature Reserve is."

"We hope it will serve to trigger further research and, most critically, greater protection of the nature reserve, which is newly established," he said.

Rovero elaborated: "Our assessment found that the forest is heavily threatened by hunting, livestock grazing and timber harvesting. The imminent construction of a pipeline encroaching the Western edge of the reserve potentially adds to these threats, but mitigation strategies are being planned."

Neil Burgess added: "It's incredible to see that this reserve, so newly designated, is already providing a home to a species never before seen in Tanzania. We may only be skimming the surface of what species view this reserve as a critical refuge."

He explained that the Reserve is actually in one of the focus areas for UNEP-WCMC's joint Development Corridors Partnership - a collaboration between Tanzania, Kenya, China and the UK meant to make sure that the development of corridors through East Africa is based on the best evidence, and the most effective use of planning tools and procedures.

"Discoveries such as this are critical in helping decision makers understand the full impact and consequences of their decisions, and can ultimately help protect wildlife and the nature that we all depend upon," noted Burgess.

The assessment is part of a wider international cooperation programme called "East Africa Livelihood Improvement Programme" co-financed by Italy's Province of Trento (International Development Service) and other partners of the European sub-region called "Euregio", with activities in Minziro coordinated by Italian NGO for international cooperation ACAV.

● **Francesco Rovero, PhD, is a tropical diversity researcher with Italy's Museo delle Scienze (MUSE) - or Science Museum - who is coordinating a long-term biodiversity programme in Tanzania's forest biodiversity. Contacts: Cell +393495970234. E-mail: Francesco.Rovero@muse.it.**

Thousands drop out of school owing to pregnancy

By Guardian Correspondent, Karagwe

A total of 2,527 girls from Karagwe district in Kagera region aged below 18 years dropped out of schools in 2018 due to various reasons including pregnancy.

Godwin Kionka, district executive director for World Vision Tanzania, Karagwe said that an evaluation exercise on a campaign to protect girls from early pregnancies implemented showed that the number has increased compared to 1,297 girls who were impregnated in 2017.

The director appealed to parents against collaborating with their children to hide culprits, insisting that security organs will take measures against them. He said parents should be part of government efforts against early marriages by ensuring that the culprits are arrested and arraigned.

The district's social welfare officer, Owokusiima Kaihula said the situation is contributed to by outdated traditional customs that girls should be married at younger ages.

Reverend Severine Selestine from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) linked the problem with parents' greed to get wealth.

Edwin Kamaleki of Mabira primary court said some of the culprits are relatives to the girl's families.

World Vision project coordinator, Bushangaro Nsiima



Preparatory work continues along the Aga Khan section of Dar es Salaam's Barack Obama Road yesterday to facilitate the construction of a modern bridge to link Upanga East area and Coco Beach in Oysterbay area through the Indian Ocean waters. The contractors are China Railway Major Bridges Engineering Group. Photo: John Badi

said the organization has been implementing various projects to end girls' early pregnancies which include provision of capacity building training for village and ward executives.

He said the organization has so far trained 225 village executives and ward councilors in Karagwe district.

World Vision has also assisted in the establishment of 22 village committees that work to protect girls in six wards namely Kiruruma, Kamagambo, Rugu, Nyakasimbi, Nyaishozi and Ithembe.

They have also provided life skills training to over 300 youths, who were also educated on the negative impacts of early

pregnancies. The United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) asserts that adolescent pregnancy led to almost 3,700 girls dropping out of primary and secondary education in Tanzania back in 2016.

More than one third of all girls are married by the age of 18, but girls from poor families are twice as likely to be married

early as girls from wealthier homes.

An estimated two million children between the ages of 7 and 13 years are out-of-school. Almost 70 per cent of children aged 14-17 years are not enrolled in secondary education while a mere 3.2 per cent are enrolled for the final two years of schooling, the UN agency underlined.

EAC strikes accord with SACU on market access

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

NEGOTIATIONS between the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) and the East African Community (EAC) has been successfully concluded marking a significant step towards market access for the private sector in the two regions.

A statement issued by the EAC on Thursday said that as part

of the market integration pillar, partner states have been engaged in bilateral tariff liberalization negotiations.

SACU consists of Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa while the EAC consists of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The conclusion of the SACU-EAC negotiations marks a signifi-

cant step towards realizing the benefits of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) which was launched in June 2015.

The statement detailed that the main aim of the SACU-EAC market access negotiations has always been to provide commercially meaningful market access for the private sector in the two regions whereby the SACU-EAC

private sector will have access to new and dynamic markets for exports as well as new sources of inputs for domestic production processes, thus enhancing intra-regional trade.

The negotiations emphasized on the development of regional value chains in a wide range of sectors to deepen integration between SACU and the EAC.

"The negotiations provide an

opportunity for the TFTA to be a building block and to have a coordinated approach for negotiations in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)," the statement noted.

The COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) aims to establish a single market for 27 African countries with a combined population of about 700 million people, equivalent

to 57 percent of the continent's population and a Gross Domestic Product of above US \$1.4 trillion.

The TFTA is built on three pillars of market integration infrastructure development and industrial development. There is also a parallel agreement on movement of business persons.

The tripartite approach reflects the desire to advance re-

gional integration from multiple fronts.

The TFTA would facilitate development of regional infrastructure for cross-border trade and lead to harmonization of trade regimes amongst tripartite member states, stimulate industrial development through creation of value chains and facilitate movement of business persons.



Roast meat and bananas on sale at a popular roadside eatery along Nyamwezi Street in Dar es Salaam's sprawling Kariakoo market area yesterday, but with the state of hygiene leaving much to be desired. Photo: John Badi

Leopard kills toddler in South Africa's Kruger park

JOHANNESBURG

Big cat that attacked two-year-old was hunted down and shot dead to avoid risk of a repeat

A leopard has killed a two-year-old boy inside a fenced-off staff compound at South Africa's Kruger national park, officials said.

"The toddler was only 30 months old," the park said in a statement on Thursday. "The boy was certified dead by doctors at the Shongwe hospital after being rushed there by family members."

The leopard attacked the boy on Wednesday evening after getting into the staff living quarters, which are separated from the rest of the park by an electrified fence.

A team of rangers hunted down the big cat and shot it dead to avoid the risk of a repeat, said the park, adding that it may have attacked as it was too accustomed to contact with humans.

"In parks like the KNP (Kruger national park) predators do interact with tourists and staff and at times it may result in species like leopard getting habituated to people and losing their fear," the park said.

"The change in natural behaviour can then lead to unfortunate incidents such as this."

The KNP said attacks were a danger faced by all staff and family members living and working in the park, but were very rare.

"This is the risk we live with on a daily basis as we help conserve our species for the benefit of all," said Fundisile Mketeni, head of South African National Parks, offering condolences to the boy's family.

Kruger covers nearly 2m hectares (4.9m acres) and is home to over 500 bird species and 147 mammal species.

The attack occurred near Crocodile Bridge, a tourist rest camp near the park's southern boundary.

Tanzania set to increase tourist arrivals to 1.4m

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

TOURISM and Natural Resources Deputy Minister Constantine Kanyasu said yesterday that Tanzania is expecting 1.4 million foreign visitors in the fiscal year 2019/2020 from the current 1.3 million tourists.

He made the remarks at the opening of Karibu and Kilifair tourism exhibition going on in Arusha city.

The tourism exhibitions attracting hundreds of participants from Africa, US, Europe and Asia targets to present tourism companies in Tanzania, East Africa and Central Africa to the rest of the world through the business networking event in combination with a community fair to attract local people, families and other visitors.

The deputy minister noted that achievements in the tourism industry depend on the collaboration between the government and the private sector. The exhibition was likely to promote the country's tourism sector thus increasing the number of tourists, he said.

"This is an opportunity to market our tourism attractions in various markets. The exhibition attracted 370 participants last year," he stated.

The chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism, Nape Nnauye commended the government for working closely with the private sector in promoting the country's tourism sector and attractions.

Nnauye said that the exhibition is crucial since it promotes the industry and boost government coffers. "Stakeholders should submit their grievances

related to laws to our committee so that they are reviewed for the interest of the nation. Laws shouldn't be an obstacle towards developing the tourism industry," he said.

Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) director Devota Mdachi said that Tanzania will host 200 tourists from Hong Kong next month. About 336 tourists from China visited the country last month. The German ambassador said his government has contributed more than Euro 100 million for implementation of projects related to conservation, health and water.

Emerging among the fast growing tourism fairs in Africa, the tourism exhibition provides a networking platform for stakeholders from around the world to share experiences, establish new business relations and improve existing contacts.



Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition's advocate Deo Bwire speaks at a security management and media law seminar for southern highlands zone journalists held in Mbeya city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Yassin

EABC: Budgets must focus on value chains

By Guardian Reporter

THE East African Business Council (EABC) has urged partner states to consider lowering the cost of doing business in the bloc in a bid to promote local manufacturing, regional value chains, and create employment opportunities.

"As EAC partner states unveil their budgets for the 2019/2020 fiscal year next week, governments should consider improving transport

infrastructures, energy and access to credit to ease doing business in the EAC," said a statement by EABC that was signed by Peter Mathuki, the executive director.

The council said that to enhance revenue collection, EAC partner states budgets should focus more on efficient and effective service delivery for growth and expansion of businesses in the EAC and beyond.

The EABC also urged adequate budgetary allocation of

resources for the implementation and monitoring of the EAC Common Market Protocol and support to national implementation committees and related activities.

"The EAC partner states' budgets for the financial year 2019/2020 should prioritize achieving the vision of the EAC industrialization strategy which includes being globally competitive, environment-friendly and ensure a sustainable industrial sector," the statement intoned.

The budgets should visualize capacity to significantly improving the living standards of the people of East Africa by 2032 and the objective of 5th EAC development strategy to building a firm foundation for transforming the EAC into a stable, competitive and sustainable lower middle income region by 2021.

EABC suggested that partner states budgets for the

coming fiscal year should address the challenges of EAC regional integration such as high costs of doing business and the cost of borrowing, allocate budget funds for implementation and monitoring of the Common Market and Customs Union protocols and increasing intra-EAC trade through elimination of non-tariff barriers.

The budgets should also focus on improving trade facilitation, fast track the fina-

lization of the EAC Common External Tariff to avoid trade distortions, elimination of work permit fees and restrictions for East Africans and enhance public-private dialogues for trade and investment.

In 2018, real GDP in East Africa grew by an estimated 5.7 percent, slightly less than the 5.9 percent level in 2017.

Although the EAC has one of the highest intra-regional trade levels among major re-

gional economic communities (RECs) in Africa, the share of intra-EAC exports dropped from 20.9 percent in 2013 to as low as 15.9 percent in 2015.

The EAC total intra investment decreased by 22.3 percent to US \$ 197million in 2017 from US \$ 254.1 million in 2016. Foreign direct investments into East Africa decreased by 25.3 percent to US \$ 6.6 billion in 2017 on the basis of the EAC Trade and Investment Report, 2017.



Garbage lies uncollected on the side of a road at Kigogo in Dar es Salaam yesterday, causing inconvenience to road users and local residents of the area alike. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Eight-year wait ends as TPA puts up Nyamirembe berth

By Guardian Correspondent, Chato

THE Marine Services Co. Ltd (MSCL) has completed construction of a 4.1bn/- modern berth at Nyamirembe port in Chato district, Geita region.

Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) supervisor in Lake Zone, Eng Abraham Msina said yesterday that they are finalizing implementation of the project which has reached 40 percent. He said the port is expected to start operations in the near future.

Eng Msina stated that Nyamirembe port will boost business within regions in Lake Zone as well as boost intra-regional trade between Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda.

The port was previously used by vessels from Mwanza, Kagera, Musoma and neighbouring countries but they stopped for eight years. TPA's decision to improve the port through a modern berth will revive port operations under MSCL, he said.

The project is implemented

by VJ Mistry Co. from Bukoba, which is finalizing construction of a passenger lounge, cargo room, electrical room and toilets.

Eng Anderson Mbogowe from VJ Mistry said the remaining work will be completed by next month, and the project handed over to the government the following month.

"The remaining work will be completed within the framed period," he said.

Meanwhile, residents of Nanyara village in Buchosa village, Sengerema district in Mwanza

region have commended TPA for constructing a berth at the Lushamba port.

They said they have been depending on canoes to travel across the villages since 1958. Construction of the berth at Lushamba will facilitate transport services between surrounding villages of Buchosa, Mwibale, Msikitini, Kisarazi and Gembale.

Buchosa village chairman Lazaro Ngonzo said the residents have been using canoe for 61 years. The village has a population of 8,798 with 13 boats providing

transport services.

Village executive officer Benjamin Ndungwizi said the project will provide employment for youths. A resident of Kanyala village, Charles Shuka appealed for the government to provide them with a ferry to ease transportation of people and cargo.

TPA acting manager for Lake Victoria, Geoffrey Lwesya said the authority has spent more than 1.2bn/- to construct a berth at Lushamba, which has reached 90 percent implementation.

High risk of SA economy hitting recession in 2019

By Carin Smith

THE odds that the South African economy could experience a technical recession in 2019 are high, according to Moody's.

The ratings agency released its latest Global Macro Outlook on Thursday. The quarterly Global Macro Outlook presents its latest growth forecasts and assesses the impact of the main trends driving the world economy.

Moody's attributes what it describes as South Africa's "persistent economic weakness" to lacklustre domestic private sector demand. It relates to both household spending and investment, and the detrimental impact of widespread power outages on the manufacturing and mining sectors.

The SA economy grew by 0.8 percent in 2018 after a technical recession in the first half of the year.

"South Africa faces complex economic problems. The task of reviving the economy will be challenging and reforms will take time to show effects," states the report.

Moody's expects a gradual pickup in real gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2019, but expects continued lacklustre momentum. It projects 1.0 percent growth for the SA economy in 2019 and 1.5 percent in 2020.

Moody's expects the SA Reserve Bank to cut the repo rate in future, to support the economy. It expects this move mainly because the latest inflation figures show it is well contained at 4.4 percent in April.

At its May meeting, SARB's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted three to two to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.75 percent. In Moody's view, the result of SA's national elections offers hope for renewed reforms in the country. The SA economy shrank by 0.8 percent in the first quarter of 2019 compared to the last quarter of 2018.

The Moody's report points out that economic activity in almost every sector - agriculture, mining, industry, transportation and retail sales - declined.

Fixed investment, which has declined every quarter since the beginning of 2018, fell by an additional 1.14 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2018. As a result, gross fixed investment is now 5 percent lower than at the end of 2017.

"With the ANC winning the election with a clear majority under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, there are hopes of a renewed push for structural reforms aimed at igniting growth and reducing unemployment, which stands at 27 percent," states the report.

"Immediate policy priorities outlined by President Ramaphosa include restructuring the highly indebted state-owned monopoly electricity utility operator Eskom and shrinking the size of the bureaucracy. The president has also discussed longer-term plans to diversify the economy away from mining."

As for the global economic outlook, the report states that a recent escalation in US-China tensions has "clouded" the global economic outlook.

"If the tensions drag on or escalate, they will leave a lasting impact on the global economy. Also, the new US threat to impose tariffs on all imports from Mexico is a reminder of the uncertainty of US trade policy," states Moody's

Pathfinder changes lives with birth control, community loans

By Felister Peter, recently in Uvinza

WOMEN in Uvinza district have a reason to smile thanks to family planning services by Pathfinder International as married couples can space births and decide on the number of children they want.

Pathfinder International in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are implementing the Tuungane project which focuses on population, health and environment (PHE) as it helps villagers to improve their social and economic welfare through various initiatives such as family planning, community conservation banks (Cocobas), fishing activities and conservation agriculture.

The project covers 44 villages in Uvinza-Kigoma and Tanganyika district in Katavi region.

The project is implemented in the Greater Mahale Ecosystem (GME) where the birth rate is 7.1 per woman. The area leads with the highest rates of pregnancy in the country, with the birth rate put at 4.8 percent against the national average of 3.2 percent.

Siwema Ramadhani from Nkonkwa village in Buhingu ward said before the Tuungane project women were giving birth to too many children hoping they will support the family in future.

"It was just poor thinking, because having too many children is not a guarantee that they will support you in future. We are thankful to the Tuungane project through its community based distributor (CBD) outreach program as the women are now giving birth to reflect the number of children they can comfortably raise," she stated, noting that under the program, sanitation at household level has also improved.

She narrated that apart from family planning, they educate families on the importance of constructing improved pit latrines, drinking boiled or treated water, washing hands and creating dish drying racks.

"We no longer experience waterborne disease such as diarrhea because we wash our hands with the tippy-tap fixed adjacent to the toilet," she said.

CBD Leader from Katumbi village, Ashura Rashid said it wasn't easy to convince men to accept family planning, but we are happy they can now escort their partners to clinic.

Spacing of births has made women healthier and can engage in other income generating activities. Previously, women were giving birth to two children in two and half years but now they give birth at an interval of three to four years.

She explained that maternal deaths have also decreased as most pregnant women attend clinics and give birth at health facilities contrary to previous years where everything was done at home. Family planning was crucial for the villagers since continuous population growth was threatening the environment especially forests as villagers depend on natural resources to survive.

Prosper Riduda is in-charge at a health facility at Katumbi village. He commended the Tuungane project for providing family planning services and reproductive health.

"With the solar panel installed at our facility and training of birth attendants, we can now provide services 24 hours. Through the project, sanitation has been improved and cut the burden of infant mortality," he explained.

He said the Tuungane program has immensely contributed to changing attitudes of men as they now escort their wives to hospital. He said previously men were reluctant on family planning thus compelling numerous married women to apply those instructions in secrecy.

The leading diseases that residents in Katumbi village face are malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia, intestinal worms, cholera, UTI, anemia and skin fungal infection.

CBD champion, Ramadhani Fumo said that Nkonkwa village has been selected as a 'model village' after more than 408 houses (80 percent) fulfilled requirements for a model house which includes having improved pit latrines, stopping

open defecation, creating dish drying racks and establish dedicated hand washing stations with soap, sand, or ash.

There are now 3,895 model households and 1,100 latrines built since 2012 when the Tuungane project started.

"Using volunteers trained by Tuungane, we managed to change the behavior of our people which includes cleaning their surrounding environment, washing hands and drinking clean boiled water. Most of them are now using the charcoal serving stoves thus reduce tree cutting", noted Fumo.

Nkonkwa Village Executive Officer (VEO), John Nyerere said: "The Tuungane project under its 'model house initiative' has resulted into most households constructing better toilets. Outbreak diseases have decreased."

Pathfinder International Health Program Officer Marcel Kato said that population pressure forced the two organizations (Pathfinder International and TNC) to engage in provid-

ing reproductive health education as well as family planning services in order to save indigenous forests.

He said about 23,000 people are now able to access voluntary family planning services.

"To protect the environment, we had to control population growth. We are now focusing on family planning among the youth since they account for almost 50 percent of the population. Our target is to ensure the young mothers are healthier and have a limited number of children," Kato said, noting that students in 20 primary and four secondary schools within the project area are currently taught environmental conservation.

Environmental clubs have also been established where students are educated on population, health and environment since the three depends on one another.

The Tuungane project, a pioneering programme focusing on population, health and environment was launched in 2012. It start-

ed with six villages and has now expanded to covering 44 villages with a population of 165,000 people.

Uvinza District Commissioner, Mwanamvua Mrindoko commended the Tuungane project for renovating twelve health facilities and constructing a dispensary at Rukoma village. She said the government appreciates the projects' contribution in family planning initiatives.

The Cocobas Initiative

Community Conservation Banks (Cocobas) have helped improve the welfare of its members as they have been able to establish small businesses through credits.

There are 65 Cocobas in the project area where to become a member, one must first join a local beach management unit (BMU) to ensure members do not invest in environmental destructive businesses activities such as charcoal making.

Agnes Majaliwa (27) is a member of 'Umoja Ukakamavu' group in Rukoma village, she said: "I first got a 700,000/- loan and another 1m/- after repaying the first one. I have been able to start a maize selling business."

She explained that the business has been beneficial to the family as she can afford to buy food for her six children and managed to build a house.

"Through my business I can raise enough money to meet family needs and put 7,000/- to Cocoba every week," she stated.

Another member of the group, Asia Juma who joined in 2016 said the initiative has helped her to make annual savings of up to 1m/-.

"We thank the Tuungane project for educating us on Cocobas, as most of us have built houses and own businesses. We encourage more women to join the group since its benefits are enormous," she added.



Siwema Ramadhani with her husband, Idd Msakaa. Photo courtesy of TNC



Shopping bags now commonly in use across Tanzania following the recent ban on the once popular plastic-based varieties displayed for sale at Uhindini in Dodoma city yesterday. However, most people interviewed said the alternative bags were selling at prices well beyond the means of many ordinary citizens. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Sahara Group for enforceable policies to support climate protection in Africa

By Special Correspondent, Abuja

WITH the world having just marked 2019 'Environment Day' (June 5) as the United Nations day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action to protect our environment, energy giant Sahara Group has advocated the need for more stakeholder collaboration in the designing and adoption of enforceable policies and regulations for effectively curbing the menace of climate change in Africa.

June 5 of every year is celebrated globally as World Environment Day. The theme for this year is: #BeatAirPollution.

Pearl Uzokwe, Director, Governance and Sustainability, Sahara Group said it was commendable that some African nations had started implementing several environmental protection policies.

However, she noted that the continent requires "holistic and tailored multi-stakeholder cooperation to achieve sustainable milestones".

World Health Organisation figures show that nine out of ten people in the world are exposed to polluted air and, worse still, air pollution kills seven million people each year.

A new World Bank report meanwhile found that air pollution costs the global economy more than \$5 trillion annually in welfare costs, with the most devastating damage occurring in the developing world.

Uzokwe said Africa needs to establish incentives that promote investments in renewable energy, pollution control technologies, energy efficiency and clean production mechanism to combat air pollution effectively.

She elaborated: "Quite impressively, we have seen policies targeted at increasing industrial energy efficiency and reducing fuel sulphur content for refined petroleum products, increasing investments in public and non-motorised transport systems and improving access to clean cooking and

heating fuels."

"What we need now is a higher level of commitment and cooperation from governments, energy companies, regulators, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure these policies are backed by laws and enforced as appropriate across the continent," she noted.

According to Uzokwe, Sahara's commitment to protecting the environment inspired the recent partnership between Sahara Energy Resources DMCC Dubai and Brooge Petroleum and Gas Investment Co (BPGIC) geared towards setting up an oil refinery with up to 250,000 barrel per day capacity to produce clean bunker fuel in the Emirate of Fujairah.

The facility will be one of the first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa to comply with the new regulations of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) 2020 by capping sulfur content in shipping fuels.

Working through West Africa Gas Limited (WAGL), a Joint Venture between Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Sahara Group, the energy conglomerate contributes to the supply of Liquefied Natural Gas to enhance access to clean and safe energy in Africa via WAGL's ultramodern vessels, MT Africa Gas and MT Sahara Gas.

Additionally, Sahara recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme to facilitate access to affordable and sustainable energy in Africa.

"Sahara Group is constantly reviewing its business practices to promote effective environmental governance, resource efficiency and ecosystem management," said the Sahara director.

"We are passionate about pursuing and promoting multi stakeholder collaboration between regional and global organisations to drive the achievement of SDGs 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and 13 (Climate Action) across the world," she added.

REA: Stop vandalising power infrastructures

By Guardian Correspondent, Lindi

THE Rural Energy Agency (REA) has called upon residents where it implements electrification projects across the country to stop vandalising infrastructures as it hampers efforts to complete the task on time.

REA acting board chairman, Dr Andrea Komba made the appeal when speaking at different times with residents of Litama and Chinongwe 'A' villages in Ruangwa district, Lindi region.

Dr Komba said the government spends billions of shillings to make sure each village is accessed with electricity, but some people have been vandalising infrastructures. Such destruction and theft of equipment contributes to delayed implementation of projects, he said.

REA has been incurring huge losses, with a project at Litama village which has so far cost 30bn/- being cited as an example. The project implemented by State Gred Ltd when completed will enable residents in the two villages improve their welfare through setting up small businesses, he said.

"The government wants you to enjoy power services and use electricity to establish income generating activities. You must protect the infrastructures since it's for your own benefit," he said, lamenting that residents have been stealing electrical wires, poles and sometimes tempering with installed transformers.

Apart from protecting the infrastructures, the residents should make sure the infrastructure lasts long to benefit future generations, he urged.

The government is now implementing the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) Phase III whereby a total of 7,873 villages will get power. The project will cover 25 regions countrywide, he added.



The government wants you to enjoy power services and use electricity to establish income generating activities. You must protect the infrastructures since it's for your own benefit



Josephat Torner, Josephat Torner Foundation Europe's (JTFE) resident director in Tanzania, explains to journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday the theme for this year's edition of International Albinism Awareness Day: 'Still Standing Strong'. The Day is marked each June 13 to celebrate the human rights of, and contributions made by, persons with albinism worldwide. Photo: Correspondent Elizabeth Faustine

Foundation to build coffee factory set to support people with albinism

By Correspondent Wilhelm Mulinda, Mwanza

THE Josephat Torner Europe Foundation has said it plans to build a coffee processing factory in Simiyu Region primarily to provide employment to persons with albinism (PWA).

The move is also expected to reduce poverty among PWA since it will help them have reliable monthly income, adding: "Our foundation currently processes Tanzanian coffee in The Netherlands for the European market, and the coffee

has attracted many customers abroad owing to its good taste."

Speaking during the run-up to celebrations to mark the International Albinism Awareness Day (June 13) in Morogoro municipality yesterday, Josephat Torner Foundation Europe director Josephat Torner told journalists that the move was also in support of the government's industrialisation drive.

"Still Standing Strong" is the theme for this year's International Albinism Awareness

Day, underscoring the need for people to recognize, celebrate and stand in solidarity with PWA around the world.

The idea is to support the cause of people with albinism - right from their accomplishments and positive practices to the promotion and protection of their basic rights.

"As Tanzania strives to become an industrialised middle-income nation, people with albinism should participate towards the realisation of the strategy as well as the development of the country, said

Torner.

He said the participation of PWA in the country's development will earn them well deserved respect in the society.

Tanzania has made noticeable headway in recent years in efforts to end threats and killings targeting PWA, crimes reported from 26 countries in different countries in the world.

The positive development has drawn people and institutions from several parts of the world to Tanzania to learn how the government, CSOs,

human rights crusaders, religious institutions, various other agencies and PWA themselves have addressed the problem.

Torner commended the government for the role it has been playing in the fight against crimes targeting PWA, including by putting in place legal provisions under which the sentence for anybody found guilty of involving in such crimes is life imprisonment.

"Persons with albinism in Tanzania are now leading a

generally peaceful and enjoyable life and can freely move from one place to another. This is in part due to efforts made by the government to sensitise the public on the rights of PWA," he said.

He said his foundation would continue to extend support to the government in its efforts to protect people with albinism as well as environmental conservation.

People with albinism face multiple forms of discrimination worldwide, with their genetic condition still widely

misunderstood socially and medically.

The physical appearance of PWA is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, which fosters their marginalisation and social exclusion - leading to stigmatisation and discrimination.

The UN proclaimed June 13 as International Albinism Awareness Day in 2015, making an impassioned global appeal for the prevention of all forms of attacks and discrimination targeting PWA.



A small trader pushes a cart loaded with undisclosed goods while heading for her business place at Tazara in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: John Badi

Police chiefs, Interpol discuss crime control in SADC zone nations

By Guardian Reporter, Lusaka

POLICE chiefs from the Southern African Development Community, grouped in the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Council Organisation (SADC/SARPCCO) are meeting in Lusaka to discuss various security challenges requiring continued regional and global cooperation to tackle.

In a keynote address, host Minister of Home Affairs Stephen Kampyongo noted that SARPCCO was formed with the aim of promoting, strengthening cooperation and fostering joint strategies in the management of all forms of cross-border and related crimes with regional implications.

Kampyongo emphasized that the region has resolved to deal with security challenges facing the SADC region, such as organized crime and cross border crimes.

He cautioned that with the rise of information technology, it has become easier to commit offences in a particular jurisdiction, without necessarily being physically present.

He said the situation creates new challenges for law enforcers hence the need for joint regional strategies and programmes to ensure that the region does not become a safe haven for criminals, who use technology to exploit innocent people.

INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock emphasized police cooperation as an effective way to address transnational organized crime in the region, highlighting police activities and projects that Interpol has supported in the region to curb transnational organized crime and criminal syndicates.

Jorge Cardoso, the director of the organ on politics, defense and security affairs, observed that the participation of the Secretary-General of INTERPOL at the opening ceremony of the SARPCCO conference was a testimony of the strategic partnership and complementary efforts between the two organizations in trying to free the SADC region from increasing elements of criminality.

Director Cardoso indicated that the region is experiencing with great concern increased threats such as smuggling of migrants, trafficking of persons, drugs, cyber-crime and the poaching of wildlife and flora, money laundering often associated with financing organized crime. "It is a daunting reality of our societies and countries at large," he told the gathering.

"Terrorism activities, in particular fueled by religious extremism and radicalization, especially of the youth through indoctrination, if not adequately addressed will undermine the efforts to make the region crime free," he stated.

Inspector General of the Zambia Police Service and chairperson of SARPCCO, Kakoma Kanganja commended efforts by partners for supporting SARPCCO's efforts to contain criminality in the region.

He indicated that crime and violence prevention has been at the core of their policy direction.

Prior to the annual general meeting, the chiefs of police met with the INTERPOL Secretary General and had an opportunity to engage with him on issues of common interest.

UN health agency concerned over Sudan crackdown

KHARTOUM, Sudan

THE United Nations health agency said it is gravely concerned over the targeting of patients, medical staff and facilities in Sudan during a military crackdown on protesters that killed over 100 people this week.

The World Health Organization said security forces are making "incursions into Khartoum hospitals", forcing shutdowns of emer-

gency and health services. Five patients and medical workers injured.

Friday's WHO statement said "these actions represent a total and unacceptable violation of international human rights law and must stop".

It says tent clinics set up to treat injured protesters have been set on fire and destroyed; medical equipment looted, and health care workers assaulted.

Rapes of female health workers have also been reported.

The military launched a crackdown on Monday, dispersing the protest movement's main sit-in in the capital, Khartoum. A Sudanese medical group says 113 people have been killed in the crackdown.

Meanwhile, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is in Sudan to mediate between the ruling military and the country's protest leaders amid an army crackdown that has killed over 100 people this week.

Ahmed was met by Sudanese generals who in April ousted longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir and took over the country.

He will hold talks separately later Friday with the Forces for the Declaration of Freedom and Change, a coalition of political groups demanding the military hand over power to ci-

vilian rule.

His visit comes after the African Union, based in Ethiopia, suspended Sudan on Thursday over the deadly crisis.

The military launched a crackdown on Monday, dispersing the protest movement's main sit-in in the capital, Khartoum.

A Sudanese medical group says 113 people have been killed in the crackdown.

DC applauds TARI, sugar farmers on meet

By Guardian Reporter, Kibaha

KIBAHA District Commissioner Assumpta Mshama has reiterated the government's commitment to continue working closely with stakeholders in the private sector in increasing sugarcane production towards realization of the country's 2025 industrialization strategy.

She was speaking during activities to mark Kibaha sugarcane farmers' day which brought together stakeholders from Kilombero, Kagera, Morogoro and Manyara. The event was organized by the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) in Kibaha.

Mshama applauded TARI for organizing the celebrations as an opportunity for cane farmers and stakeholders to meet and brainstorm on the various challenges they face.

"The government will continue to collaborate with stakeholders in the sugarcane farming area towards industrialization," she stated.

DC Mshama said the government established TARI here in 2016, making Kibaha among the 17 districts with similar centers. TARI is responsible for conducting agricultural research for improvement of crop farming, including sugar-

cane.

Hans Veenstra, head of the agriculture department at Kilombero Sugar Company Ltd, said the firm supports researches on sugarcane farming as outgrowers in the Kilombero valley are also benefiting from professional advices from TARI.

"We support TARI because its researches are useful to outgrowers. It through researches we can increase our sugar production and improve the quality of our canes," he said, noting that the company has employed 24 extension officers providing professional assistance to farmers.

Grace Kabate, a senior officer from the Sugar Board of Tanzania (SBT) emphasized on stakeholders to continue celebrating the sugarcane farmers' day to exchange views on how to ensure sustainability of the crop.

Since most sugar manufacturers plan to expand their factories, it was crucial to improve sugarcane farming to ensure reliable sugar supply, she said, affirming that SBT has prepared a database of over 6,000 cane farmers with the aim of assisting them to produce enough for local industries.

In February, the parliamentary standing

committee on agriculture, livestock and water suggested heavy investments in cane cultivation, factory expansion and improvement of road infrastructures for the country to produce enough sugar for domestic consumption.

Committee chairman Mahmoud Mgemwa said the country's sugar demand for 2018/2019 stands at 670,000 tonnes of which 515,000 tonnes is for domestic use and 155,000 for industrial needs.

Local sugar manufacturers were expected to produce 353,900 tonnes in the 2018/2019 season, with the gap filled by imports, he added.



Estim Company workers engaged in the ongoing expansion of the Dar es Salaam-Kibaha stretch of Morogoro Road plant grass at Kimara Mwisho yesterday in an effort to prevent soil erosion and forestall needless damage to the road. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

WHO: 25 percent of Ebola infections in eastern DR Congo going undetected

DR Congo

ROUGHLY a quarter of Ebola infections in eastern Congo are estimated to be going undetected or found too late, a World Health Organization (WHO) expert said on Friday.

Some 2,025 cases and 1,357 deaths have been recorded since the epidemic began in August in the Democratic Republic of Congo's North Kivu and Ituri provinces, said Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme.

It is the second-worst outbreak of the virus on record.

Some 88 infections have been detected each of the last two weeks, down from a peak of 126 weekly in April, and WHO teams are following up on 15,000 suspected contacts each day, a "huge number" who require checking for symptoms, he added.

"We believe, let me be very cautious here, we believe we are probably detecting in excess of 75% of cases - we may be missing up to a quarter of cases," Ryan told a news briefing in Geneva.

There were "a lot of cases with very delayed detection", he added. "We must get earlier detection of cases, have more exhaustive identification of cases."

The epidemic was not under control, he said, and was spreading fast in the rural area of Mabalako.

Ryan said risks to aid workers had decreased of late but noted a deadly attack on civilians earlier this week.

A local official said 13 civilians were killed late on Monday in an attack by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) - a group thought to be linked to Islamic State.

Greater political engagement is needed to combat the Ebola outbreak, Ryan said. "We need the government to reach out to the opposition, we need an 'all party' approach... we need a single voice of leaders in Congo about this outbreak."

World Bank sees sharper constraints to cut poverty

By Guardian Reporter

Global economic growth is forecast to ease to a weaker-than-expected 2.6 percent in 2019 before inching up to 2.7 percent in 2020.

However, growth in emerging markets and developing economies is expected to stabilize next year as some countries move past periods of financial strain, but economic momentum remains weak.

A monthly report by the World Bank states that emerging markets and developing economies' growth is constrained by sluggish investment, and risks are tilted to the downside.

The risks include rising trade barriers, renewed financial stress

and sharper-than-expected slowdowns in several major economies, the World Bank said in its June 2019 Global Economic Prospects.

"Stronger economic growth is essential to reducing poverty and improving living standards," said World Bank Group President David Malpass.

Current economic momentum remains weak, while heightened debt levels and subdued investment growth in developing economies are holding countries back from achieving their potential, he said.

"It's urgent that countries make significant structural reforms that improve the business climate and attract investment. They also need to make debt

management and transparency a high priority so that new debt adds to growth and investment," he pointed out.

World Bank Group Vice President for Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions, Ceyla Pazarbasioglu said that while almost every economy faces headwinds, the poorest countries face the most daunting challenges because of fragility, geographic isolation and entrenched poverty.

"Unless they can get onto a faster growth trajectory, the goal of lowering extreme poverty to three percent by 2030 will remain unreachable," she declared.

World Bank Prospects Group Director Ayhan Kose said that in the current environment of low global interest rates and weak

growth, additional government borrowing might appear to be an attractive option for financing growth-enhancing projects.

"However, as the long history of financial crises has repeatedly shown, debt cannot be treated as a free lunch," he said.

Growth among advanced economies as a group is anticipated to slow in 2019, especially in the Euro Area, due to weaker exports and investment.

Economic growth in the U.S. is forecast to ease to 2.5 percent this year and decelerate to 1.7 percent in 2020. Euro Area growth is projected to hover around 1.4 percent in 2020/21, with softness in trade and domestic demand weighing on activity despite continued support from monetary

policy.

Growth among emerging market and developing economies is projected to fall to a four-year low of 4 percent in 2019 before recovering to 4.6 percent in 2020.

A number of economies are coping with the impact of financial stress and political uncertainty. Those drags are anticipated to wane and global trade growth - which is projected to be the weakest in 2019 since the financial crisis a decade ago -- is expected to recover somewhat.

The report noted that government debt has risen substantially in emerging and developing economies, as hard-won cuts in public debt ratios prior to the financial crisis have to a large extent been reversed.

Emerging and developing economies need to strike a careful balance between borrowing to promote growth and avoiding risks associated with excessive borrowing.

Growth rates in low-income countries are expected to rise to 6 percent in 2020 from 5.4 percent in 2019, but that is still not enough to substantially reduce poverty.

While a number of low-income countries progressed to middle income status between 2000 and 2018, the remaining low-income countries face steeper challenges to achieving similar progress.

Many are poorer than the countries that made the leap to higher income levels and are

fragile, disadvantaged by geography and heavily reliant on agriculture.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, regional growth is expected to accelerate to 3.3 percent in 2020, assuming that investor sentiment toward some of the large economies of the region improves, that oil production will recover for large exporters, and that robust growth in non-resource-intensive economies will be underpinned by continued strong agricultural production and sustained public investment.

Per capita GDP is expected to rise in the region but it will nevertheless be insufficient to significantly reduce poverty, the report added.

Kyela customs point villagers await payment for relocating

By Guardian Correspondent, Kyela

MORE than 200 residents of Kasumulu town in Kyela district, Mbeya region have appealed to the government to compensate them so that they relocate to allow construction of a joint customs center between Tanzania and Malawi.

Speaking to journalists, the residents said the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communications has so far not started to compensate them despite President John Magufuli's directive late last month.

A resident, Reverend John Kyamba said they have been waiting to be compensated to relocate to other places but district authorities are yet to act.

"Officials were directed to pay us but we have not received a single cent. Timely payments will facilitate our re-

location as well as allow contractors to smoothly implement the project," he said.

Neema Lyolo said the only thing they are pushing for is payment for their structures and properties. She complained that since the government announced intention to take over the areas, most residents have stopped cultivating or building new houses as they wait to be relocated.

"District officials conducted evaluation of our properties but they have not come back to compensate us," she said.

Commenting, Kyela district council chairman Hunter Mwakifuna said the transportation authorities promised to settle the payments by end of this month.

Ministry officials have promised to complete analysis of the villagers'

claims and names before June 30, with assessment conducted to make sure that only those eligible are compensated, he stated.

"The names are assessed to ensure government monies are paid to eligible villagers," he further noted.

Kyela District Commissioner Claudia Kitta called upon the residents to remain calm as the government at the ministry level finalizes procedures for their payments.



The names are assessed to ensure government monies are paid to eligible villagers



A vendor quenches his thirst as he hunts for customers for his home-made baskets at the Selander Bridge section of Dar es Salaam's Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road yesterday. Photo: John Badi

With US lifting of ban on wildlife trophies, what of tourist hunting?

STAKEHOLDERS have reacted with relief at the news of a lifting by the United States government of wildlife trophies exported from Tanzania, following a satisfactory field report by US government agencies and other stakeholders on the current state of supervision of the wildlife sector. There was also concern with management of natural resources as a whole, but lack of commitment on suppression of poaching and killing of elephants on an 'industrial' scale was the clincher to the ban.

Other southern African states were included in the ban, even where their other relations with the US or the West as a whole are excellent, a good example being the case of Botswana.

What local stakeholders are now hoping for is the sorting out of the hunting safaris and export ban, which started with the problem with the US market and applied on a wider scale, putting in peril investments in the wildlife sector, like breeding insects and collecting irrelevant animal species for export.

Some of the species collected are ordinarily a nuisance to farmers and other land use stakeholders, and constitute little or nothing in expectations at the local level of how they could otherwise be used as natural resources. It was thus a case of killing off a source of income for a whole range of individuals, without apparently serving the interests of any alternative group, or even the state.

A salutary example of what stakeholders are demanding and definitely it is within actual policy and indeed common sense, is the situation in crocodile hunting, which is treated as a commercially useful product, and at the public level crocodiles are little more than a nuisance.

But there is a generalized view of wildlife management that can be said to be rather colonial in character, not

because it arises from the colonial period per se but constitutes in juxtaposing the people and the government in relation to wildlife resources. A wildlife official has to ask topmost authorities if any animal in the country can be killed for any reason; most crocodiles aren't even in restricted areas like game parks.

While it is possible to suggest that stakeholders take up crocodile farming more extensively to control their own source of income, there is evidence from most regions where substantial rivers are found that crocodiles are a major public nuisance and scarcely a tourist attraction.

Crocodiles aren't among the usual safari pullers like lion, leopard, elephant, giraffe, buffalo or the migration of wildebeest and zebras to greener pastures, twice annually and are more a part of environmental pressures like baboons or wild pigs. It is thus unnecessary to think twice or thrice at the level of policy as to whether crocodiles ought to be hunted, as the issue there seems to be who owns the animal's skin, etc.

A certain amount of liberalism is needed in relaxing controls not just on tourist hunting especially with the US market being open to our exports, such that policy is predictable in the sector, and local people become stakeholders as well.

Many localities have suffered from ravages arising from crocodile attack, and if they can as well make use of the animal's products like meat or skin, it shouldn't trouble policy makers.

If any additional safeguards in relation to culling or exploitation of that resource as a whole, they should be communicated to district level for supervision.

This way controls will be relaxed for wildlife exporters as a whole, the crocodile nuisance being reduced to the past.

Danger: Climate change indicators appear to be intensifying by the day

CLIMATE change is a topic that does not appear to be coming to a conclusion anytime soon, partly because the data and its interpretation is always an ongoing issue, with changes in ordinary temperature and character of ocean-based disturbances like typhoons, tornadoes and hurricanes. Mozambique for instance suffered two catastrophic storms within a month of one another and in one rainy season, while it often suffered such calamities once in five years, or perhaps a decade. It is clear that predictions on what comes next are difficult to make, crippling policy projection as the public authorities aren't sure where to stand when laying out climate change intervention strategies for instance.

In the United States for example there is a change in thinking among Conservative climate change skeptics, who had for years backed indifference to taking climate change battling initiatives, only focusing on wider technological advancements as the most important response to whatever threat exists in that sphere.

Now that attitude is changing as the scale of climate change induced catastrophic events has been taking sharper and more profound characteristics since Hurricane Katrina during summer 2005, an event that started to soften the US stand on climate change. In Africa the usual blame game and pursuit of more aid related to climate change is changing, to concrete initiatives.

In Tanzania for instance many districts are prohibiting the felling of trees for charcoal, but concrete movement in this direction is hampered by traditionalism of a series of stakeholders, for instance wishing to propagate unstable alternative stoves made of clay which need to be constantly replaced. Kenya took the more audacious step of making gas cylinders free of charge and

reimbursing the money through slight increases in price as the government knows it has to spend to weaning people from charcoal dependency, not just rely on the market. We need the same measure locally and production of small cylinders that can be filled at 10,000/- to enable most families routinely refill them.

There is another reason while a total ban on the felling of trees even for furniture making purposes could make sense, thus adopting hard plastics for furnishing that ordinarily requires wood, and procuring such wood from private plantations which in that sense produce wood from farmland, not forests.

It is the fact that the final solution to climate change threats is broader reforestation of dry lands around the world, and especially deserts.

Since the issue is absorption of carbon monoxide, methane and similar gases, stopping or reducing their production isn't a feasible solution as it clashes with aspirations of industrialization, hence reforestation makes better sense as way out.

In that context there is still plenty to do take the world away from lengthy debates on who produces more gases and ought to pay more funds to some global fund for climate change interventions which critics will say channels vast funds into unworkable projects or through non-transparent methods, etc.

The focus will helpfully be directed at how much each country can put more land under tree cover, and even a global plan with a difference - not to eliminate production of greenhouse gases but set a date for greening of deserts say by 50 per cent by 2050.

As the wise of old said, "it can be done if you play your part," at the national level, regional cooperation and finally global institutions.

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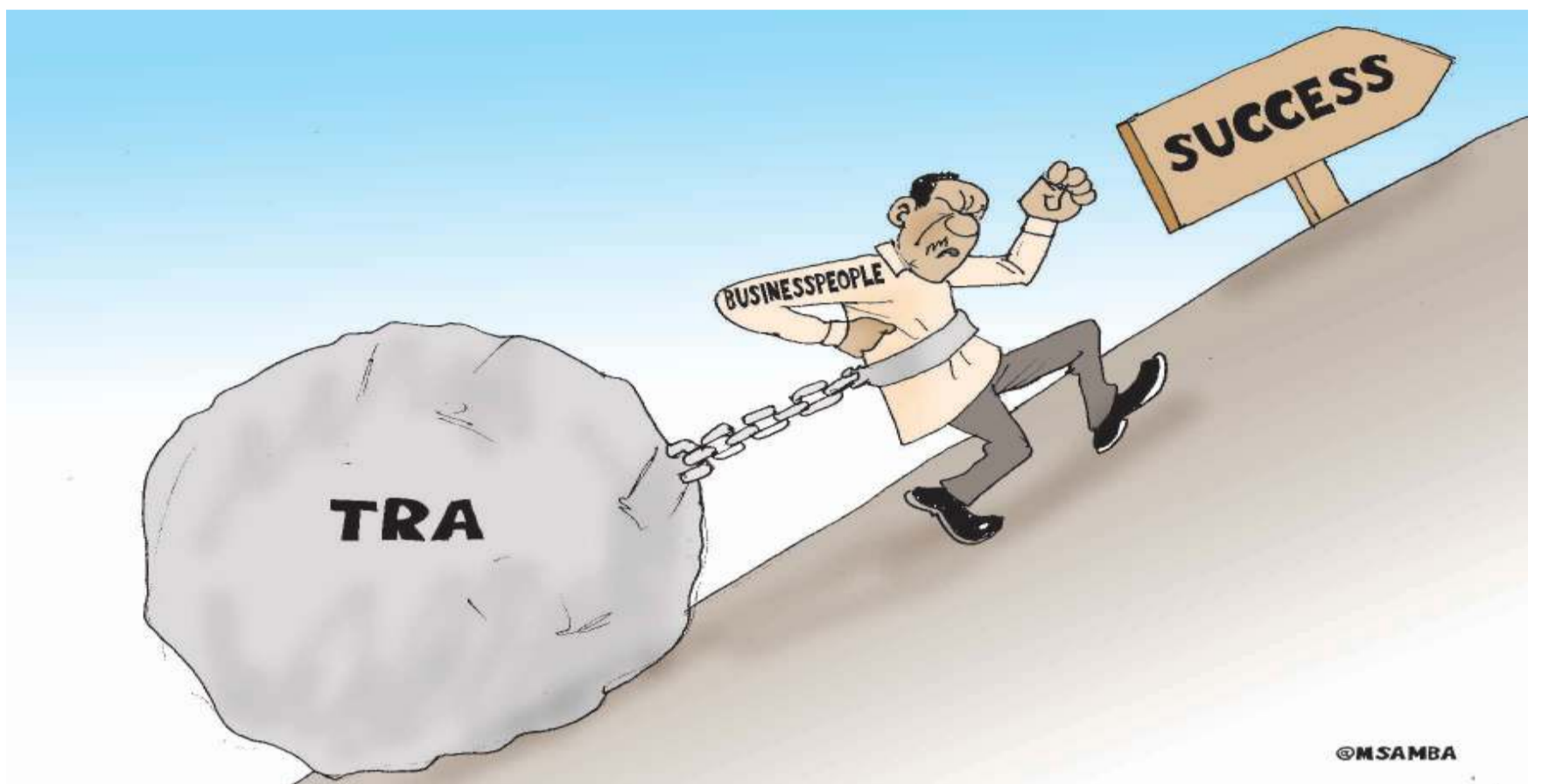
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Better technology may not necessarily translate into faster economic growth

By Correspondent Muharram

Macatta

TECHNOLOGY-AIDED dissemination of information is widely touted as a powerful weapon of democracy. And it is often argued that benefits of introducing modern technology far outweigh the economic and other costs involved.

The tools of the Information Age taken for granted by developed nations now have greater power to boost health and wealth levels in developing nations like never before.

Organisations in the most technologically developed world are sinking enormous amounts of time and resources into the development of technological infrastructure and computing-based education in the developing world.

Their large-scale projects are dedicated to the goal of providing IT access to as many people as possible, ostensibly to empower them to realise increasingly decent financial, educational and social gains.

These organisations include government-supported lending institutions and agencies as well as private sector businesses. The adoption of technology by developing countries has, thus, had profound effects on their respective economies, including reducing costs of production, establishing better quality assurance standards and allowing individuals to communicate effectively even between long distances.

There should be no major differences among regions in both urban and rural settings and whether it means men or women, young or old, et cetera, when it comes to access to IT.

Information promises a world of opportunities to everybody and this, considered alongside the use of modern technologies, is key in changing lives for the better.

Unfortunately, the current process remains one of adaptation rather than innovation. In addition, the need for technologies appropriate to the capabilities of the developing countries' poor has only recently been recognized.

Integration of technology in developing countries promises several advantages, one being economic growth and development. Through such integration, developing countries will have the opportunity to have better connections with the rest of the world.

One major challenge to the diffusion of technology in low-

income nations is its uneven distribution and penetration within the continent and the rest of the world.

In order to participate in a high-tech marketplace really meaningfully, developing nations require individuals with technical expertise. Serious problems arise when they attempt to make overly rapid advances in education, producing graduates without a satisfactory infrastructure to support the education system.

Families must be able to afford to take their children to school, educational institutions need resources such as current textbooks and electricity, and educated individuals require incentives to remain in their home nations.

Technological advancement is unambiguously correlated with globalisation. The information age has raised the rate of globalisation to unprecedented levels, as the rapid expansion of the internet creates an irreversibly networked world.

This analysis examines the positive and negative consequences of technological changes in developing countries, specifically investigating changes in the economy, culture, and education.

Developed nations need to moderate their influence elsewhere. Rapid changes in unstable environments and a lack of quality infrastructure easily lead to destabilisation and cause more problems than nations can solve.

Many developing countries have experienced an unprecedented level of technological advancement in the past ten-plus years, propelled by increased foreign trade and investments in human capital.

In fact, technological achievement in low- and middle-income nations has increased more rapidly than in high-income countries. Despite this impressive growth, though, large gaps remain - in part because the developing world is only in the stages of adopting pre-existing technologies rather than actively pursuing new innovations.

Also, although the diffusion of new technologies between countries is quick, they take much longer to disseminate within a nation.

Overall, it will be especially important for governments to consider investing in modern technology to facilitate the respective countries' inclusion in the global economy.

Developing nations often lack the necessary backbone for their education programmes in very basic ways. Generally, this occurs when demand for education out-

paces the capacity to establish and fund the relevant institutions.

Tanzania, for example, boasts a big number of government-funded technical institutes known as the vocational education and training centres, some being among the most highly rated technical institutes in the country.

At the same time, many of Tanzania's universities suffer from problems as fundamental as lack of reliable electricity, having to rely of old textbooks, and some members of the academic frequently failing to show up for lectures with no advance warning.

The lack of adequate electricity and modern textbooks are especially crippling to education. Technical education is a fundamental issue developing nations must address to take a leading role in the high-tech world economy.

Even if a nation has the financial resources to provide access to technology, this is of little use without the appropriate training. This will apply because demand for skilled individuals in certain occupations such as computer programming usually exceeds supply by far.

However, achieving the requisite technical training in developing countries is easier said than done because the countries commonly face serious obstacles in educating their citizens.

In fact, inability to developing policies to integrate technology in their system is strongly considered to be one of the primary reasons for the poor economy of those countries.

Currently, advanced technology is used as the primary agent to keep people connected around the world. Today, developing countries cease to incorporate technology into their communication, leading to an increasing gap with other parts of the world.

As a result, people from all over the globe tend to pay less attention to the poor economic conditions of developing countries. By avoiding integration of technology, those countries will instead reach economic stagnation, which might later increase poverty and lead to a higher unemployment rate.

Developing nations gain very little from educating their population if they are unable to retain the workers they train. Oftentimes, workers with technical training can enjoy higher salary, better working conditions, and higher standards of living in western nations than in their home nations.

As a result, some of the most educated citizens of developing nations - who earn enough skills

to become eligible for employment in western nations - often have little incentive not to emigrate.

Additionally, the problem of brain drain is mitigated somewhat by the fact that many citizens of developing nations who move overseas (Diaspora) remit money to their families, thereby still benefiting the economy of their homeland.

At the other extreme, Tanzania can master a system of "reverse brain drain", encouraging their best and brightest to go overseas, receive training, earn a degree, and then return home.

This system successfully offsets some of the financial burden of educational to Western nations, but it relies on a strong sense of nationality and ties to one's homeland.

The World Wide Web technology is one of the most popular inventions that support growth theory in economics and is considered to be one of the greatest solutions to increase the African developing countries current economic situation.

Other developed countries use all kinds of existing technological devices and practices to help them work on new ideas and implement them into reality.

Therefore, marginal productivity rates in those nations are directly related to the technological discoveries their people make that allow them in gaining a sustainable economic growth over their competitors.

On the contrary, developing countries are typically positioned far from this economic growth mainly owing to lack of readily available technological resources.

In many developing countries the unemployment rate is found to be very high. Driving technology can decrease the unemployment rate by creating more job opportunities in those countries.

Recent years have seen other developed countries use advanced technologies to significantly contribute to their market development and increase productivity, which developing countries can also benefit from.

For instance, by integrating technology in Third World countries more IT companies will be able to open - this leading to an increase in job opportunities.

With the support of the technological transformation the benefits will be remarkable and it will build upon local technical skills in our African respective countries.

One of the main reasons to infuse technology in the Third World countries is that existing technologies developed by other nations can be used.

The African developing countries just need to learn how to integrate and operate them. Consequently, with all integrated technological advantages, African developing countries will have the opportunity to develop and share the same conditions as the Western World.

However, different ways should be determined in order for this phenomenon to occur. One of the possible ways proved by several economic analysts to infuse technology to developing countries is globalisation, which can be reached by advanced technological emergence.

Globalisation can occur through communication channels, technical and scientific workshops that will allow countries to adopt the existing advanced technologies. Also, globalisation will help African developing countries in adjusting to technology at a much faster pace.

While integrating technology in nations where such cultural heritage is important, various ethical factors must be placed into consideration. In order to meaningfully infuse technology into African developing countries, it is crucial to take social, economic, and political factors into account.

Infusing technology into African developing countries can make a positive difference to their nations. With globalisation and the help of developed countries, African developing countries will achieve economic development and growth.

However, it is important to seriously consider infrastructure development plans in order to support the integration of advanced technologies.

Technology will bridge developing countries to the rest of the world and make them more approachable. Sustainable technology-aided development will offer excellent opportunities and raise the standard of living of the people. It will also create more job opportunities and enhance the level and quality of education.

Mothers in the US are dying: What are we doing to save them?

WASHINGTON

THE maternal mortality rate in the United States is the highest of any developed country - and the rate is rising. The US is currently the most dangerous place to give birth in the developed world.

Few to none of these maternal deaths are due to medical mismanagement. Instead, problems of access, care coordination, and inequities in health care resources and social services are at the heart of maternal death rates.

Minority women, particularly those facing socioeconomic challenges, are the primary victims behind these statistics - nationally, African American women are three to four times more likely to die from childbirth than non-Hispanic white women.

Heavy hitters like The New York Times, USA Today, NPR, and others have highlighted the problem of maternal mortality and called for action; and cities like DC have responded to the call by implementing maternal mortality task forces.

Consistently, these task forces have arrived at the same conclusion: the causes affecting pregnancy-related deaths are not separate threads, but a web; and these overlapping social, economic, behavioral, and genetic determinants cannot be adequately addressed by siloed stakeholders.

There are many who have long recognized this problem, and a few who have been actively committing resources toward creating solutions. They have put energy, time, and capital on the line to disrupt the status quo, addressing the problems to make improved pregnancy outcomes a reality.

Cradle Cincinnati is an exemplar. They have formed a coalition that connects all of the significant stakeholders in the pregnancy space to combat the high infant mortality rates in Hamilton County, Ohio, joining families in the community to payers and health systems (including traditional competitors).

Cradle's strategic model has made significant steps toward improving out-



comes: for five years in a row, the number of sleep-related infant deaths in Hamilton County was lower than their historic average, dropping from 16 to 12 annually.

But 12 is still over the national average of nine, and the national average is nine too many. While a single life is at stake, we need to be taking leaps, not steps, to better outcomes.

While effective, models like Cradle and others like it (group prenatal care, for example) all share a dependence on human interaction, and this physical

requirement is a huge constraint to scaling such programs. Without scalability, outcomes will continue to improve at a snail's pace, eventually plateauing. We need to be able to scale these best practices in every community - not tomorrow but today.

This is where technology comes in. Tech can bridge the gap created by the human limitations of these models, and embedding proven workflows and care protocols in tech experi-

ences that enable more interventions - like remote patient monitoring (RPM) through internet of things (IoT) devices - can be the key to scaling these alternative and more effective care models.

Digital tools provide the connectivity that models like Cradle deliver in the physical setting, while addressing the problems of cost, inefficiencies, and scalability that have slowed progress in the past.

More than 4 years ago, George

Washington University Medical Faculty Associates (GW-MFA) anticipated this vision. They were one of the first providers in the United States to recognize the power of tech to disrupt outdated and insufficient standards of care in the pregnancy space - standards that had woefully failed in their purpose.

GW-MFA were early adopters of a novel model that directly addresses three troubling realities in the status quo: absence of

education, lack of access to necessary care, and failure to stratify risk.

That new model was a partnership to create and deploy a technology-powered pregnancy solution to directly impact the pregnancy journey and its associated outcomes, supporting patients and providers with increased digital touchpoints, educational materials, and interventions through remote monitoring and digital engagement.

Now, in an industry first, the vision to connect all stakeholders in the space is being realized through a new partnership with AmeriHealth Caritas DC, a managed care organization, which has joined with GW-MFA to further deploy tech-enabled prenatal and postpartum care in the Medicaid population, a population often ignored by the technology community.

Partnerships such as this one begin to solve some of the structural difficulties in coordinating care between insurance companies and doctors for Medicaid patients.

It will focus on increasing access to tech-enabled pregnancy care that allows all patients, regardless of their socioeconomic status, to receive the benefits of remote monitoring and virtual care with the same privacy and security as a physical interaction at the doctor's office.

There is no excuse for the current statistics of maternal death. The healthcare industry has had the technology to impact care, but what has been missing is the combined vision to make these tools powerful agents of change. Mothers and infants in our communities have a right to a safe and healthy life, and partnerships such as this one have the power to be the difference.

IPS

Get storm gear out, wave of Ace-led populism on land and Reserve Bank has only started

By Sam Mkokeli

THE debate about both the ownership and mandate of the South African Reserve Bank displays the dysfunction of the ANC and quite frankly, we ain't seen nothing yet. Here is how it came about.

Many economic policy moderates in the ANC were stunned when delegates at the party's policy conference in June 2017 wanted to nationalise the Bank. In short, they wanted the state to own the Bank.

This came as a huge surprise to the group that believes in a free market and traditional macro-economics. The latter group also supported President Cyril Ramaphosa in his battle against Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma for the presidency of the ruling party. Just like that, policy and political battles were intertwined in an orgy of proxy and real battles.

The Ramaphosa camp started spreading notes about the undesirability of such a move, and how ownership did not affect interest rates. This did not deter their opponents, who were driving two headline policy matters under the broad umbrella of radical economic transformation:

- Nationalise the bank,
- Grab land

The two debates broke through at the main conference in December 2017. On the last day of the conference, all hell broke loose, scuffle after scuffle on the conference floor led to a tactical concession from the Ramaphosa camp. Enoch Godongwana was involved in crafting a resolution about

the land issue, which gave in to the expropriation of land without compensation, so long as that did not affect the economy. At that stage, Ramaphosa was chomping at the bit, ready to deliver closing remarks as the newly minted president of Nelson Mandela's ANC.

If he didn't concede that point then, the conference could easily have collapsed, and Zuma would have remained head of state, while there would have been endless debates about the decisions of the conference. So the Ramaphosa camp settled, and even ditched its grumbling about whether Magashule really got more votes than Senzo Mchunu for the secretary-general post. It was time for shrewd politics from the CRI7 camp, and not for the winner takes all approach. After all, Ramaphosa's victory gave them a beachhead from which to launch their battle for total power.

His speech writers rushed backstage to make sure the important resolution came out of his mouth, as a way of smothering the populist wave, to give the proponents the sense that they gained a victory. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the Ramaphosa camp's strategists knew very well no such large-scale expropriation without compensation would happen. They had, by then, also accepted that the debate about the nationalisation of the Reserve Bank was like a genie out of the bottle. They started arguing that it was financially not feasible.

They thought it would die a slow death and there was no need to launch a forceful counter-argument. It was ex-



ANC secretary-general Ace Magashule

pedience, or pragmatism at best; your call.

This strategy comes straight out of the Jacob Zuma school of political management. The Prince of Nkandla adopted it after the party's mid-term conference (the National General Council) in 2010, at which the ANC Youth League, with the likes of Floyd Shivambu, managed to force the idea of nationalising mines on the party agenda.

So raucous was the debate that some stormed the stage, causing pandemonium and prompting state bodyguards to step in to protect government office bearers such as Zuma and Baleka Mbete.

Having survived the Youth League's attempted coup - the nationalisation debate evolved into a proxy tool to remove him

from office - Zuma allowed the debate to rage on. A study was commissioned and two years later the obvious conclusion was reached, that nationalisation was not feasible.

This was at a huge cost to the economy as it created policy uncertainty.

Now Zuma is gone; the issues remain. Magashule is now being lampooned for his "quantity easing" statement out of the ANC lekgotla at the weekend. You have to ask one question: Why did the Ramaphosa faction let Magashule out of sight for one minute after such an important meeting?

This is how the lekgotla went down, I'm told: There was a "plenary session", at which all the issues were discussed by highly skilled people and those well-

qualified in the rumble of vuvuzela politics and sloganeering.

The gathering broke into commissions on Sunday. Naturally, the Economic Transformation Commission gets all the attention. It was a free-for-all.

The idea to nationalise the Reserve Bank made its way into the notes that usually get filtered on their way to reporting back to the plenary.

Eventually, Ramaphosa addressed the matter in his closing remarks and was not dismissive, but warned about a hierarchy of priorities, which did not include zooming in on the work of the Bank.

He and his confidantes would have thought they did well to suppress the debate. Then Magashule, being Magashule, saw fit to slot it in the press statement to communicate the outcomes of the gathering.

Well, he probably did not draft it himself since typing is not an organic skill to people whose fingers are groomed for a variety of other activities, most of which exclude actual writing.

You see, if the CR camp did not value Zizi Kodwa's role in political management, now is the time to wonder what would have happened had he still been full-time at Luthuli House, instead of being a deputy minister with no constitutionally derived duty or power.

The man is like a duck, he

looks suave and sounds chilled in TV appearances, but back at Luthuli House, he is the guy who intercepts things and disrupts the likes of Magashule.

Also, the new administration has taken the likes of Fikile Mbalula and Mchunu to Pretoria and away from Luthuli House.

So the man called Ace has to contend only with Jessie Duarte, his deputy, and a handful of employees.

With the help of the ANC constitution, which effectively recognises his role as that of a third-in-command and the general spokesman for the party - additionally to that he has a mini-me in Pule Mabe hanging on his coattails - Magashule is free to cause maximum damage from Luthuli House. It's like, akeh' ugo, the 'cat is away' type situation.

At some stage, someone more eloquent than Magashule will join the populist wave and take on the likes of Godongwana and Tito Mboweni.

The land and Reserve Bank debates are about to be major talking points in the build-up to the National General Council next year. The two will evolve into proxy tools to weaken Ramaphosa.

And his opponents will rely on the decision from the Nasrec conference, however that is meant to be interpreted.

DM

UNITED NATIONS

Afghan schools left unprotected by govt and international community

ATACKS on Afghan schools tripled between 2017 and 2018, according to a UNICEF report released last week: from 68 attacks to 192 in 2018. This figure seems unlikely to decrease as the Afghan government prepares to use schools once again for political activity in the upcoming election.

The report comes following the Third International Conference on Safe Schools in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. The international community met to discuss the Safe Schools Declaration which outlines means to protect schools in times of conflict. Attendees have called into question the effectiveness of this Declaration.

UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore expressed concern that education in Afghanistan was "under fire."

"The senseless attacks on schools; the killing, injury and abduction of teachers; and the threats against education are destroying the hopes and dreams of an entire generation of children," she said in a statement.

On Tuesday Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said in a statement, "due to the conflict in Afghanistan, more than 1,000 schools closed by the end of last year, leaving half a million children out of school."

This swell in attacks comes as schools are being pulled deeper into the conflict in Afghanistan. They are used more and more frequently in elections. Educational institutions were used as polling booths for Afghanistan's to cast their votes in the 2018 presidential election, as well as in 2014.

The majority of schools attacked in 2018 were used in some capacity during the elections.

Anthony Neal, the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Advocacy Manager in Afghanistan and attendee at the Third International Conference on Safe Schools, said in a statement to IPS, "out of the 192 attacks on schools that took place last year, 92 of these

were election-related," adding, "using schools in this way places them directly on the front line."

While schools have been used peacefully for political purposes elsewhere, the unique political situation in Afghanistan places a target on schools used in this capacity.

In many countries around the world schools are used as polling centres - including just recently across Europe for the European Parliamentary elections. In most countries this occurs without increasing the risk of attack on these facilities," Anthony Neal told IPS, "unfortunately in Afghanistan - where elections are seen as a major divide between the different sides of the conflict - this is not the case."

Patricia Gossman, Senior Researcher in Afghanistan for Human Rights Watch, echoed this statement when she told IPS "a polling place is going to be a target unfortunately, given the Taliban's attitude toward the elections."

Organisations have called for polling booths and voter registration centres to be moved away from schools.

"Many schools across Afghanistan are currently being used by armed forces," Neal said, "in order to protect education in Afghanistan, those supporting the elections should find alternative polling and voter registration sites."

Despite this call to find new locations for election activities, the Afghan government seems to have made no progress in finding alternate sites, with reports indicating they are already preparing school buildings for the elections.

"They have made no preparations to use any other facilities," Gossman said, "it is not beyond the means of those planning to come up with an-



other facility."

She suggested using tents as polling booths, which have been used successfully in other countries before, and are independent, neutral and cheap.

With the upcoming election scheduled for September, Af-

ghanistan could see a worsening in an already precarious educational situation.

According to the World Bank, Afghanistan has a literacy rate of just 31%, one of the lowest in the world. This is partly due to the near complete prohibition of fe-

male education under Islamist Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001.

The UNICEF report released last week underscores this deterioration, estimating 3.7 million school-aged children, close to half of all Afghans between the ages of 7 and 17, do not attend

formal schools.

Attacks on educational institutions in Afghanistan is part of a global issue that the international community has attempted to address.

In a statement to the Third International Conference on Safe Schools Mark Lowcock, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator said, "in the last five years, more than 14,000 attacks on education were reported in 34 countries."

He claimed poor adherence to the Safe Schools Declaration, to which Afghanistan is a signatory, is partly to blame; "when countries sign up for the declaration, they have to implement the obligations under it," he added, "we are seeing too many examples of forces occupying schools. That has to stop."

In the specific case of Afghanistan, however, the effectiveness of the Safe Schools Declaration seems questionable.

Speaking on the intensity of the violence in Afghanistan, Gossman noted, "even the best intentions seem to get thrown at the wind once you're faced with this kind of pace of conflict."

She added, "there's all kinds of promises on paper that look very good, but implementation and enforcement are severely lacking."

While the Safe Schools Declaration may aim to protect education in times of conflict, when faced with a context in which education is being violently targeted it seems powerless to instigate real change.

IPS

China-Russia local cooperation on fast track

By Yin Xinyu, Zhang Xiaodong, Qu Pei

LOCAL cooperation between China and Russia has been prospering as the year of local cooperation and exchange between the two countries is coming to an end. It is injecting new impetus and connotation to the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.

The infrastructure connectivity between the two countries has been notably enhanced, with bridge, road and cableway projects being built. They have also enjoyed a variety of economic and cultural activities on both governmental and non-governmental levels, holding forums, exhibitions, and sealing deals.

The two countries have established two major regional cooperation mechanisms - the Council of Cooperation between the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River and the Volga Federal District and the Intergovernmental Commission for Cooperation of the Northeast China and the Far East and Baikal Region of Russia, as well as the local cooperation council of China-Russia Friendship Committee for Peace and Development.

Besides, they have also set up relations between 140 pairs of sister cities and provincial-level regions. With these efforts, bilateral regional cooperation has covered all fields and regions. Yangtze-Volga cooperation has witnessed improvement both in scale and quality. Last year, the trade volume between Russia and six Chinese provinces and municipality including Sichuan, Hubei, Hunan, Anhui, Jiangxi and Chongqing reached nearly \$5 billion, up 30 percent. Some provinces even witnessed growths of over 80 percent.

China has remained the largest trading partner of Russia's Far East region for years. Dozens of Chinese-funded enterprises have entered the leap-forward development zone in the Far East and the free port of Vladivostok.

China's investment projects in the region cover various sectors including agriculture, forestry, building ma-



terials and commerce.

Russia attaches great importance to the development of the Far East, and has approved more than 30 acts and over 100 regulations to promote the construction of the leap-forward development zone and the free port of Vladivostok, said Sergey Tyrtsev, First Deputy Minister of the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic.

The cooperation between the Far East and China enjoys sound momentum in trade, education, and culture. Over 70 percent of the foreign investors in the region are from China, Tyrtsev introduced.

A Russian girl learns Chinese calligraphy at a Spring Festival celebration held by the China Culture Center in Moscow, Russia, Feb. 2, 2019. (Xinhua)

China-Russia cooperation has seen a good start in 2019. According to Chinese statistics, in the first four months of this year, bilateral trade volume reached \$33.17 billion, up 5.8 percent year on year.

With the rapid growth of bilateral trade, local cooperation has been advanced across the board, witnessing increasingly closer investment cooperation. Enterprises from the two countries are realizing in-depth exchanges thanks to the China-Russia Expo, China-Russia Inter-regional Cooperation Fo-

rum and other bilateral forums and exhibitions.

Maksimov Nyurgum Romanovich, president of the Yakutia branch of the Russia-China Friendship Association and director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the North-Eastern Federal University (NEFU) said that his university is a witness of the rapid development of Russia-China local cooperation.

NEFU had no Chinese students 10 years ago, but now it has more than 100 and will receive another 100 this fall, he intro-

duced.

In addition, the faculty members of the university have maintained close cooperation with their Chinese partners. This summer, they will team up with researchers from northeast China's Heilongjiang province for a joint investigation in the Arctic ports in Yakutia.

Education is not the only field in which Yakutia hopes to cooperate with China.

The republic boasts rich tourism resources, vast tundra, and one of the coldest permanently inhabited settlements on

earth - Oymyakon, Maksimov said, adding that Yakutia hopes to attract Chinese tourists to explore the mysteries there.

Local cooperation between China and Russia enjoys great potential, said Chinese Ambassador to Russia Li Hui, noting that the two countries will give full play to their cooperation mechanisms at both government and local levels, enhance communication and coordination on policy and regulation, so as to create a favorable business environment.

People's Daily

'Dramatic' rise in Africans arrested at US border

TEXAS

US border patrol agents in Texas have detained hundreds of people from African countries over the past week.

US Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) says the "dramatic rise" in migrants from African countries arriving in the area is a "humanitarian crisis".

More than 500 African migrants have arrived at Del Rio border patrol sector in the past week, since 30 May.

Most of these people are families that have travelled from Angola, Cameroon and the Republic of Congo, CBP said.

Last week, on 30 May, one large group of 116 people who had all originally travelled from African countries arrived at the southern border.

In a statement, Del Rio Sector's chief patrol agent Raul L. Ortiz said that language barriers and cultural differences were also placing "additional burdens on [border patrol] processing stations".

Many of the migrants have also travelled on to San Antonio in Texas, some 240 km (150 miles) from Del Rio.

A spokeswoman for San Antonio's city government told BBC News that they were "operating a resource centre for those travelling" and have "partnered up with local charities" to provide people with necessities such

as food and shelter.

Local news reporter Jaleesa Irizarry also tweeted that the city was "in desperate need for French-speaking volunteers", and that local centres expected up to 300 more migrants to arrive in the next few days.

However, in a recent interview with NPR, some African migrants described travelling from their home countries to Brazil, before making their way north through Colombia and Central America towards the US-Mexico border. Such a journey typically takes several months.

Footage released by CBP shows migrants completing the journey's final leg of that journey, by wading through the Rio Grande river that separates Mexico from Texas.

According to the CBP's acting commissioner John Sanders, the agency is currently detaining almost 19,000 people in total.

"When we have 4,000 people in custody, we consider it high," he told a press conference. "If there's 6,000 people in custody, we considered it a crisis. Right now, we have nearly 19,000 people in custody. So it's just off the charts."

In May, a record 144,278 migrants arrived at the southern border, more than 100,000 of whom were families and children.

Since September last year, six children have died in US custody after being detained by border patrol agents.



Nearly half of all child deaths in Africa stem from hunger - research

By Agencies

ONE in three African children are stunted and hunger accounts for almost half of all child deaths across the continent, an Addis Ababa-based thinktank has warned.

In an urgent call for action, a study by the African Child Policy Forum said that nearly 60 million children in Africa do not have enough food despite the continent's economic growth in recent years.

A child dies every three seconds globally due to food deprivation - 10,000 children every day - but although figures show an improvement in child hunger at a global level, it is getting worse in some parts of Africa, where the problem is largely a question of political will.

Nine out of 10 African children do not meet the criteria for minimum acceptable diet outlined by the World Health Organization, and two out of five don't eat meals regularly. Liberia, Congo and Chad are at the bottom of the chart when it comes to children aged six to 23 months receiving sufficient and diverse food with a healthy frequency. They are followed by Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sub-Saharan Africa can only grow if it solves hunger crisis - UNDP

"Child hunger is fundamentally a political problem," said Assefa Bekele, ACPF's executive director. "It is the offspring of the unholy alliance of political indifference, unaccountable governance, and economic mismanagement. Persistent and naked though the reality is, it remains a silent tragedy, one that remains largely unacknowledged and tolerated, perhaps because it is a poor man's problem."

Bekele added: "It is completely unacceptable that children are still going hungry in Africa in the 21st century. The statistics are truly alarming. Child hunger is driven by extreme poverty, uneven and unequal economic growth, gender inequality and a broken food system. Although Africa now produces more food than ever, it hasn't resulted in better diets."

Hunger impairs growth and cognitive development of children, but also hits the economic performance of the country they come from. Child hunger can cost African countries almost 17% of their GDP, according to the report. The continent's present GDP is estimated to have been reduced by 10% be-

cause of stunting alone.

Annually, child hunger costs Ethiopia 16.5% of its GDP. The rate for Rwanda is 11.5%. The report says "for every dollar invested in reducing stunting, there is a return of about \$22 (£17) in Chad, \$21 in Senegal, and \$17 in Niger and Uganda", and if the investment is made early in the child's life, the return rates can be even higher: up to \$85 in Nigeria, \$80 in Sudan and \$60 in Kenya.

Africa could have one billion undernourished, malnourished and hungry children and young people by 2050 if current levels continue unabated. More than half of African countries are currently off course to meet targets required in the African regional nutrition strategy (2015-

2025). Just nine countries will meet the target of reducing stunting by 40% by 2025.

Mauritius and South Africa are among the states with fewer children suffering from hunger, while Central African Republic and Chad are the worst child-friendly nations, according to ACPF.

Child hunger has been in sharp contrast with economic growth seen in countries such as Kenya, which has had a 2% average growth in GDP per capita but also a 2.5% increase in stunting.

Child rights campaigner Graça Machel said at last month's International Policy Conference on the African Child: "Women and girls, along with children from poor and rural backgrounds, suf-

fer the most from hunger. In some countries, stunting rates are twice as high among rural children as among their urban counterparts."

Conflict and the climate crisis have exacerbated child hunger in Africa, with three out of four of the continent's stunted children under the age of five living in countries turned into war zones.

In areas experiencing protracted conflicts, the rate of undernourishment in children is about two to three times higher.

In 2017, more than eight million people in Ethiopia, five million in Malawi, four million in Zimbabwe and three million in Kenya were affected by acute food insecurity caused by issues relating to the climate crisis.



Schoolchildren in the Amboasary-South district of Madagascar have lunch provided by the World Food Programme. Photo: AFP

Malawi President accuses opposition of wanting to overthrow govt by force

LILONGWE

MALAWI President Arthur Peter Mutharika has accused the opposition which has rejected the outcome of last month's election of wanting to 'overthrow the government by force'.

Backers of the opposition Malawi Congress Party (MCP) allege their leader Lazarus Chakwera was robbed of victory in the May 21 election, which an official count showed he lost by just 159,000 votes.

"We have seen the Reverend Lazarus Chakwera... call for violence and a blood bath to plunge this country into chaos," Mutharika said in a national television address.

"The real objective of the Reverend Chakwera is to overthrow the government by violence and force," he added.

Chakwera has rejected the outcome of the



presidential election as "daylight robbery" and launched a court battle to have the result annulled on the grounds of fraud.

Earlier on Thursday, the US ambassador to Malawi was forced to hurriedly leave the MCP's headquarters as police fired teargas

at protesters.

MCP supporters had gathered in the capital Lilongwe as part of ongoing street protests.

US ambassador Virginia Palmer told AFP she was making a farewell call at the opposi-

tion party headquarters.

"Just as we finished the meeting, apparently rocks were thrown and the police responded with teargas," she said.

"There was teargas flying around but my security people came and we proceeded out without incident."

The US embassy is located next to the MCP building in Lilongwe.

"I just call on all parties in Malawi to exercise restraint and proceed peacefully while the MCP court case is going forward," said Palmer, who is due to leave her Malawi posting shortly.

"This is a peaceful country and a democratic country and we all need to respect these norms."

Eyewitness Jones Chinkhwangwa told AFP: "As the police continued firing (teargas) we saw the US ambassador's vehicle rushing out of the party headquarters."

"She was whisked away in a car with the US flag."

MCP spokesperson Eisenhower Mkaka told AFP that police had raided the party headquarters and disrupted several meetings.

"We had to run for our dear lives. The president (of the party) left the premises," he said.

In the ballot count, Mutharika, of the Democratic Progressive Party, was declared the victor with 38.57% of the vote, beating Chakwera on 35.41%.

On Tuesday, thousands of MCP supporters marched through the city and burst into government offices.

EU deputy chief election observer Mark Stephens has said "there were a lot of mistakes that were made in the tallying" but there was little evidence of tampering.

US refusal to competition impedes development, leads to failure

By Zhong Sheng

If a cause is beneficial to society, it should be granted free development and broad competition, and the freer and broader the competition is, the more beneficial the cause would be to society. What Adam Smith says in the Wealth of Nations is still applicable to today's world where economic globalization is going through in-depth development.

However, it is shocking that some US politicians, worshiping technological hegemonism, are going against the trend of time, trying to narrow the space for international cooperation by refusing competitions. Their practices infringed upon the legitimate right of other countries to develop.

Recently, the US government abused national power and frequently turned its gun toward Chinese high-tech enterprises that have climbed to the top of the world through hard work including Huawei. It banned Huawei from participating in the US construction of telecommunication equipment, especially 5G equipment with fabricated reasons such as the so-called theft of secrets and national security.

The US administration later placed Huawei on the "Entity List", forcing many American companies to cut supplies for the Chinese tech firm. Through the "presumption of denial", it exerted extreme pressure on Huawei by national power, and even requested relevant enterprises to contain the latter. Such practice is totally unreasonable and overbearing.

As a major technological and economic power in the world, the US should have understood the law of technological development and the benefit of market competition. However, the US politicians, ignoring such common sense on purpose, have made frequent attempts to interfere with technological cooperation and market competition.

They resort to "national security"

because they couldn't find better excuses, which indicated the fragility of the largest tech power whose "national security" is opposed to threats so easily.

It's obvious that what the US really intends to do under the banner of the "national security" is to contain the development of China's technology, so as to win more space and time for its own companies to gain monopoly in the global competition of 5G technology and the international division of labor.

Such plot exactly exposed the hegemonic philosophy of the Uncle Sam that only allows itself to develop and refuses to accept the progress of the others. The practice indicated the supremacy that the US has always enjoyed as the only dominator of the world.

There's an old saying in China that strong men can conquer themselves. The best way to face competition is never containing the rivals, but improving self-capabilities. To maintain the leading position in technology, the US should make efforts to upgrade domestic enterprises and enhance their competitiveness.

However, some Americans, represented by former White House Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, talked nonsense that China presents "the greatest existential danger" ever to the US and "When China wants to supplant US dominance in an emerging industry, it acts rapaciously - it steals." There is also voice in the US that "The race for 5G is on, and America must win."

As a matter of fact, by containing its rivals and cutting win-win cooperation with such mean approaches, the US will not see any progress made in its information technology, but only its enterprises being forced to use outdated and expensive substitutes, as well as slower steps in 5G construction.

These unconventional methods can serve as a temporary "protecting um-

brella", but will never bring tangible development.

A Scottish philosopher once compared "noble emulation" to the "source of every excellence". The fundamental feature of market economy is emulation.

A fair environment for competition can constantly stimulate the energy of market entities, facilitate the orderly flow of production factors, effective allocation of resources, and in-depth integration of markets, as well as promote the high-quality development of economy.

It was through healthy competition that US carmakers Ford and General Motors both rose to fame and made remarkable

achievements for the US auto industry at the beginning of the last century. The US, boasting its free competition and market economy, is taking competition so irrationally and ignoring international trade rules. How can it keep its credibility in the international society as it upholds trade protectionism and contains tech companies of other countries?

The US refusal to competition impedes progress. Containing rivals won't help itself maintain dominance, and it would not stay at an invincible position by adopting unconventional approaches either.

The hegemonic US politicians should try to figure out why the

US firms in the Silicon Valley are still sparing no efforts to make shipments to China before the Huawei ban takes effect despite the US attempts to stop Chinese companies from participating in global competition.

They should also try to understand why global countries are still choosing to cooperate with Huawei despite the US-fabricated stories tarnishing the company.

The reason, which is quite simple, is that cooperation leads to win-win situation that can enlarge the cake of interests for each party involved, and refusal to competition would only impact the global supply chain and create unnecessary risks for

world economy.

Decades ago, China broke the western blockade and made its own nuclear bombs, intercontinental ballistic missile, and artificial satellite. Today, the country's steps of technological innovation still won't be stopped by the disturbance from US politicians.

The attempts to stop the strong impetus of China's progress by hegemony or infringe upon the legitimate right of the country's development by blockade are destined to fail.

The trend of history is irreversible, and the mean approaches of the US will not help it maintain the leading position.

People's Daily



ANC speaks with forked tongue – it's time for Ramaphosa to stamp his authority on the country

ON the day that StatsSA announced that South Africa's economy shrank by 3.2% in the first quarter of 2019, ANC secretary-general Ace Magashule told the media that the NEC had decided at its recent legkotla that the mandate of the South African Reserve Bank should be broadened.

Part of the context is that in 2017, a resolution taken at the ANC's Nasrec conference affirmed that the Reserve Bank should be 100% owned by the state – nationalised. That resolution, however, did not deal with expanding the Reserve Bank's mandate.

Tinkering with the Reserve Bank has for a long while been the worn-out mantra of those within the ANC who also championed "radical economic transformation". What we know now is that RET simply meant radical looting of the state that we are all paying for and will continue to pay for in perpetuity, it seems.

In his comment to the media, Magashule spoke of exploring "quantity (sic) easing to address inter-governmental debts".

"Quantity easing?" Or did he mean "quantitative easing" and how would that provide economic solutions to inter-governmental debt?

It is for this reason that Reserve Bank governor Lesetja Kganyago has fiercely defended the mandate and independence of the bank. He probably knows that what the ANC charlatans – including Magashule – touch will turn to ruin very fast.

Magashule's further comment that unemployment is a "national emergency" and that it will be reduced by 13% in five years is gobbledygook spoken by someone who should not occupy the position he does, let alone speak on the economy, about which he understands precious little.

Magashule is right that the economic situation is an emergency, yet the "cure" seems to be elusive and there can be no quick fixes to deal with unemployment in a stagnant economy.

And so, when the situation is dire, then as citizens we can reasonably expect our government to lead and not make matters worse. As soon as Magashule had spoken, Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni took to social media to explain the Reserve Bank's mandate and said that government determines the mandate of the Reserve Bank.

Meanwhile, the ANC's economic transformation head Enoch Godongwana said that no decision was made at the legkotla to expand the Reserve Bank's mandate and that Magashule's comments on quantitative easing were "inaccurate". Godong-

wana ended in a welcome and forthright manner, "the matter is therefore closed".

The question is, who is to be believed? The Minister of Finance, the Reserve Bank or the ANC – but then which part of the ANC? Godongwana's or Magashule's?

And herein lies the rub.

The ANC cannot speak with one voice because its secretary-general and the faction he represents are actively trying to undermine President Cyril Ramaphosa. They may deny it, but it is clear as daylight. All of the confusion should be seen through this lens.

Magashule is not an honest broker or messenger and we should not treat him as such.

Context is everything in politics and it is curious that the Reserve Bank matter raises its head yet again as the Public Protector, too, again attempts to flex her rather weak legal muscles. It was after all the Public Protector, Busisiwe Mkhwebane, who raised the mandate of the Reserve Bank back in 2017.

Then, in a bizarre twist arising out of her recommendations for remedial action in the Absa "lifeboat" matter, Mkhwebane recommended that Parliament, via its justice committee, "must" initiate a process that will ensure the amendment of s224 of the Constitution. That section deals with the role, function and independence of the Reserve Bank.

Going even further, Mkhwebane provided draft wording for the changing of s224. It presently reads: "The primary object of the South African Reserve Bank is to protect the value of the currency in the interest of balanced and sustainable economic growth in the Republic."

The Public Protector's mealy-mouthed wording would read:

"The primary object of the Reserve Bank is to promote balanced and sustainable economic growth, while ensuring that the socio-economic well-being of the citizens are protected."

Deleted, therefore, is the mandate of the bank to protect the value of the currency.

The argument about the powers of the Reserve Bank is not a new one. Cosatu has always argued that the Bank's role ought to be revisited. In fact, in 2016 both Cosatu and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) called for the "nationalisation" of the Reserve Bank.

This remedial action was strange, to say the least, as was Mkhwebane's belief that it was even within her power to suggest such economic tinkering.



President Cyril Ramaphosa

It raised an uncomfortable, but necessary questions about the Public Protector herself and her integrity. Since then she has pursued Minister of Public Enterprises Pravin Gordhan with a single-minded determination while ignoring investigations of import. If one were to be charitable one could say that she does not have a full grasp of the law or the powers of her office.

Alternatively, one might say that Mkhwebane has become a political player herself. This past week she took to YouTube to defend her actions against Gordhan, all of which appear spurious.

Mkhwebane had also been sitting on reports regarding the relationship between the ANC and the Guptas. In 2018 she hesitatingly agreed to investigate the #GuptaLeaks emails, but not without the caveat that her office lacks the resources and so will probably not be able to do a complete job.

Well, that did not stop her predecessor Thuli Madonsela. How we miss Ma-

donsela's integrity and her unflinching ability to speak truth to power.

And so in a time of economic uncertainty and ANC-inflicted turmoil, we would do well to join the dots between the likes of Magashule and Mkhwebane and the other "radical economic transformers".

Their modus is abundantly transparent, after all.

It is, therefore, time for President Ramaphosa to lead with the mandate given to him on 8 May 2019. There can be no more pussy-footing around those who seek to destroy an economy already in tatters. It creates uncertainty we can ill afford and which will stymie Ramaphosa's efforts to attract investment.

He has to throw down the gauntlet to his political rivals and claim the victory that he won in the election. That will mean, inter alia, creating broad alliances across society including business, civil society and labour and squeezing

out those in the Magashule faction as far as he is able to.

Now is not the time for cowering silence. It is also not the time for government ministers to make their positions known on social media. A capable state has spokespersons through whom it speaks clearly to citizens. Mboweni would do well to use those channels. Projecting stability and control is what is needed now, not the added confusion of "likes" and retweets. Social media is not a platform for proper communication on such important matters.

And so, as the president prepares for his State of the Nation address on 20 June 2019, he will hopefully provide us with the clarity we need to answer the question: "Who runs this place?"

Ramaphosa cannot afford to equivocate or falter, since that speech will set the tone for the next five years, which will be complex, to say the least.

BUSINESS

CRISIS

There's a CEO crisis in South Africa and no one is stepping up

JOHANNESBURG

The history of business is filled with executives coming to the fore during adversity. Think Steve Jobs taking back Apple and turning it into a tech powerhouse, or Alan Mulally steering Ford out of the late-2000s car-industry recession.

Then there's South Africa, where an exodus of chief executive officers during an economic downturn is becoming alarming, particularly as there are apparently so few ready replacements. Since October, at least seven CEOs have departed from some of the country's most powerful institutions, and none have yet been permanently replaced.

The following list may in part explain why business confidence in the country has fallen five months in the last six.

South African Airways - Vuyani Jarana

The former Vodacom executive's resignation last week came as a surprise, as he had been widely viewed as capable of steering the state airline through to a 2021 break-even target. Jarana cited a lack of financial support from the government, making it impossible for him to be confident of a successful turnaround.

Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd. - Phakamani Hadebe

Hadebe became the 10th CEO to quit the stricken state power utility in as many years, citing the "unimaginable demands" of what is arguably South Africa's toughest corporate job. There are few obvious candidates to replace him at the electricity provider, which is saddled with almost R500bn billion in debt and was responsible for nationwide blackouts earlier this year.

Old Mutual - Peter Moyo

The 174-year-old insurer suspended Moyo two weeks ago over a conflict of interest involving his investment firm NMT Capital, despite knowing about the link when the 56-year-old was appointed. In response, Moyo insisted he'd done nothing wrong and demanded a full pay out. The terms of his suspension and departure are still

being worked out.

Massmart Holdings - Guy Hayward

The Walmart-owned general goods retailer said its CEO will leave before the end of the year amid a torrid trading environment for retailers. The US parent named a Walmart veteran to take over, but Mitchell Sape can only come to South Africa when he has been granted a work permit.

Absa Group - Maria Ramos

South Africa's third-largest bank said in January that Maria Ramos would retire following a split from former UK parent Barclays Bank. Absa said a replacement should be announced by the Aug. 13 half-year results presentation. South African Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Daniel Mminele is being considered, people familiar with the matter said in February.

Public Investment Corporation - Daniel Matjila

Africa's biggest fund manager and custodian of South African state-worker pension funds accepted Matjila's resignation in November following criticism of various investments. The PIC is now the subject of an ongoing commission of inquiry, and has only had acting CEOs since. The whole board of directors offered to resign in February.

Transnet - Siyabonga Gama

The state-owned ports and rail company dismissed its most recent full-time CEO in October after he became embroiled in corruption allegations surrounding the purchase of new locomotives.



Absa Group's former CEO, Maria Ramos.



Some of the Mount Meru oil tankers parked in Dar es Salaam. File photo.

PROSECUTION

Mount Meru directors facing charges at Shinyanga court

By Guardian on Saturday Reporter

FOUR directors of Mount Meru Petroleum Limited are facing criminal charges at Shinyanga Resident's Magistrate Court over violation of Contractors Registration Act of 1997 as amended in 2008.

In a summons published in the local media last week, Shinyanga Resident Magistrate ordered Mount Meru's Arvin Kumar Mittal, Atu Mittal, Sarvesh Jain and Tarsem Aggarwal to appear before the court on Friday, June 28 facing criminal charges after engaging an un-

registered contractor.

"You are hereby commanded in the name of the Republic to appear in the Court on the 28 day of June, 2019 at 08:00am, or soon thereafter as the case can be heard," said the summon.

The latest development comes at a time when Mount Meru's oil tankers have been detained by authorities in Zambia on misclassification of content and alleged smuggled edible oil.

Over a fortnight ago, Zambia's Daily Nation newspaper reported that Mount Meru tankers were detained by Zambia Revenue Authority officials for loading cooking oil in tank-

ers labelled as petroleum carriers. Instead of carrying fuel, they were transporting cooking oil which they disguised as crude palm oil.

There is now fear that contamination of edible oil being carried in the fuel tankers could pose serious health risks to consumers, Daily Nation said in its story. The paper's reporters who gained entry into the ZRA warehouse in Makeni found the 36 fuel tankers belonging to Mount Meru which were impounded last month for allegedly smuggling cooking oil.

Zambia's Consumer

Protection Commission also demanded an explanation and possible sanctions on the company if it was found wanting, saying such practices were detrimental to the health of the consumers.

CCPC Director, Chilufya Sampa said the action by Mount Meru was unfortunate. "I would not think that a tanker meant for fuel can also be used for edible products like cooking oil and if it is true, this is a very unfortunate development. They should be sanctioned. We hope that the sanctions imposed on them will stop them from engaging in such practices," Sampa, the

paper quoted the CCPC chief as saying.

But Tanzania Revenue Authority's Deputy Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Patrick Akonaay said their investigations had established that the petroleum tankers were loaded with edible oil at port of Beira in Mozambique.

"Mount Meru trucks which are being held by Zambian authorities did not originate from Dar es Salaam Port. The petroleum tankers were loaded at Beira Port in Mozambique," Akonaay said while commenting on allegations that the trucks' port of origin was Dar es Salaam.

REMUNERATION

Six top bank CEOs earn Sh1 billion in one year up

NAIROBI

Kenya's six highest-earning bank chief executive officers took home a total of Sh1 billion in salaries, allowances and bonuses last year, reaping from increased profitability of the lenders even as other sectors of the economy went through lean times.

Pay disclosures made in the banks' annual reports show that the CEOs of Co-operative Bank, KCB, Barclays Kenya, Standard Chartered, NIC Bank and mortgage financier HF together earned Sh1.01 billion in 2018, up from Sh987 million a year earlier.

The top-six earners took home nearly twice their basic salaries in bonuses and allowances on average. Banks' incentive-based pay packages are designed to reward performance as measured by the lenders' bottom line growth.

Double-digit growth in the lenders' profitability has in recent years generated heated debate when viewed against record profit warnings and job cuts announced by non-financial institutions. Co-operative and KCB, whose chief executives - Gideon Muriuki and Joshua Oigara - earned Sh376 million and Sh273 million respectively last year, attributed the bulk of their pay to performance-based bonuses.

Mr Muriuki's basic salary for the year stood at Sh105.5 million, while Mr Oigara's was Sh68 million. "The main driver for the increase in the executive directors' pay was bonus payment, which is performance-based and an enhancement in the bonus policy for employees," said KCB in an earlier response to queries on the CEO's pay.



Gideon Muriuki (Sh376.47m) (left), Joshua Oigara (Sh273m) (centre) and Jeremy Awori (Sh101.6m).



"Bonus and salary adjustments for staff are tied to achievement of multiple metrics, including profitability of the group and at all times reflect the bank's performance in a year."

Co-operative Bank said Mr Muriuki's bonus was a reward for turning around the bank and growing it to Kenya's third-biggest lender by earnings and assets size. The bank reported an 11.6 percent rise in net profit to Sh12.7 billion in the year, while KCB's net earnings rose by 22 percent to Sh24 billion.

Barclays Kenya chief executive Jeremy Awori took home a basic salary of Sh34.3 million, with bonuses

and allowances totalling Sh66.8 million. The other three bank executives in the top earners list had to contend with lower year-on-year pay packages.

Standard Chartered paid its former CEO Lamin Manjang Sh100.9 million, some Sh3 million lower compared to 2017. Mr Manjang left the Kenya unit in December 2018. NIC Bank MD John Gachora was paid Sh95.9 million last year compared to Sh98 million in 2017, with his basic pay standing at Sh61.6 million.

Former HF managing director Frank Ireri, who left the home loans lender in March this year, was paid

Sh64.1 million last year compared to Sh64.4 million in 2017. The average employee of these six banks is, however, outstripped in earnings by their CEO by a factor of nearly 64 times. The median bank worker was paid on average Sh2.64 million or Sh220,200 per month.

In the wider market, the performance of the banks has contrasted with that of many other companies that have struggled to grow their bottom line in the face of a challenging economic environment. At least 15 listed firms issued profit warnings in 2018, which meant that full-year earnings would fall by at least 25 percent over

the previous financial period.

The 15 firms were drawn from the energy, insurance, manufacturing and service sectors. Most blamed the drop in performance on lower purchasing power among their customers, energy costs and - in the case of insurers - an underperforming stock market.

Among the firms that declared a profit warning were East African Portland Cement Company, industrial gas producer Carbacid, Unga Group, Uchumi Supermarkets and Crown Paints. Others were insurers Sanlam, UAP Holdings and Britam, Kenya Power and Bamburi Cement.

PROGRESS

First Rwandan smartphone hits market in two months

KIGALI

Locally made smartphones by Mara Corporation will be available on the local and international markets within two months, Ashish Thakkar, the company's chief executive said on Thursday.

He was speaking at the inaugural Made-in-Africa Leadership Conference in Kigali, which brought together senior executives and business leaders from across the continent. Thakkar was speaking during a session dubbed, "From trading to legacy-building: Creating lasting products and companies in Africa."

Among the key issues being discussed at the two-day conference include challenges and opportunities in leading and expanding businesses in Africa, sustainable leadership in SMEs, African leadership in scientific research, financing company growth on the continent, and building a sustainable Pan-African business.

Thakkar said the construction and setting up of the factory, at the Special Economic Zone in Gasabo District, are in the final stages. "The Mara phones factory in Rwanda will employ at least 200 people from day one, 16 per cent of whom will be women," he said. "This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals." Mara developed a strategy for the next ten years, he said.

The Made-In-Rwanda smartphones are expected enhance access to digital services and further deepen internet penetration in the country. The business leader said they will have different models, retailing at varying prices between \$100 and \$200. He added that some of the phones will be for the Rwandan market while others will be for foreign markets within Africa.

Those designed for other markets elsewhere on the continent, Thakkar said, they will have a Made-in-Africa logo, while those for the local market will bear two logos; Made-in-Rwanda and Made-in-Africa.

OUTSTANDING

Meet the man behind M-Pesa's spiraling growth in the market

Vodacom's M-Pesa has evolved from a simple mobile money transfer platform into a robust ecosystem of services covering utility payments, money banking, savings and loans and international remittances as well as merchant payments services in just over a decade since it was introduced in Tanzania. The brains behind this rapid growing platform which has revolutionized the way people spend, save, and send money, is a Tanzanian, Epimack Mbeteni, the M-Commerce Director at the telecom firm. In this interview with Guardian on Saturday Reporter, Mbeteni sheds light on issue, excerpts:

How did you get into the telecoms sector?

My story begins at the University of Dar es Salaam in 2003 where I was among students of computer engineering. Vodacom had just started their graduate trainee (GT) program which identifies potential young brains to join the company. I was one of the three that joined the company in 2004. From the moment I joined, I knew for sure this is where I was meant to be.

What was your role when you joined as a graduate trainee?

I actually joined as a system administrator in the IT department where I was managing a platform for post-paid customers and later on I managed subscriber administration platform which was like a central customer database. I worked in IT department for six years but my dream was bigger than that because my ambition was not only moving into the commercial business unit, but actually heading the department because I felt it is where the "action" was. I learnt that it is the commercial department that makes things happen through sales and marketing. There is a difference between enjoying a meal in the sitting room and actually being in

the kitchen cooking it - I wanted to be in the kitchen, know how the food is cooked and cook it myself.

How did you pursue your dream and what motivated you?

As I said, I always wanted to be in the commercial business unit but I did not know how to get there from IT. I knew I needed to learn and was on the lookout for opportunities to do something new. So when I saw a job opening in a different telco doing something out of IT, I knew that was my chance. I applied and got the job, I left Vodacom but kept my dream of coming back alive. I was working for systems in the mobile money space for three years, which is where I first interacted with mobile money and immediately knew it was a game-changer. I worked hard to learn all about it and was a top performer which led to me being approached by another telco to set up their mobile money system. The project had stalled for two years but I was able to launch it in six months then left and returned to Vodacom.

Back to Vodacom, what made you take keen interest in mobile money?

Returning to Vodacom felt like coming



back home and because this time I joined the M-Commerce Department. This time I was exactly where I wanted to be and as head of product development, I knew I would make a difference. I was awed by the uptake of mobile money in the country and happy to see the impact we were having not only on the economy but in the lives of Tanzanians so for me M-Pesa was more than a product, it was the future.

Why is M-Pesa so important to you and why should we watch out for it?

I believe businesses thrive when they have an impact to the society by providing solutions to their problems. In the past decade, M-Pesa has moved from just allowing people to send and receive money and to become an intrinsic part of life. Today people save on M-Pesa, access loans, use it as a banking service but we have also simplified payments for electricity and water for instance and we support digital payments to government.

M-PESA is a key revenue driver for Vodacom contributing 34.5 percent. We are still growing by double digits year on year because of the solutions we offer to people and we are still coming up with innovative solutions to meet the real time needs of Tanzanians.

How do you see competition from rival telcos

and commercial banks?

For me it is a good challenge and I welcome competition in the market. With 39 percent market share and slightly over nine million customers, we are bullish about growth prospects and maintain the leading position because we have strategically invested in key products.

We have done massive investments in infrastructure and we have clear diversification of our products. For instance, we have just launched Sharia compliant Halal-Pesa in partnership with Amana Bank to meet needs of Muslims. Earlier this year we launched M-Koba in partnership with TPB Bank Plc to provide digital financial solutions to individuals engaged in savings through formal Vicoba and informal savings groups. We have registered over 1,500 groups in two months, this is because M-Koba offers them exactly what they were lacking: transparency, security and record-keeping.

Actually if you ask me, the main competition for M-Pesa is not other mobile money operators but hard cash. In Tanzania more than 90 percent of financial transactions are cash transaction and all mobile money operators are working to bring it down.

So what are your plans to take the product to the next level?

Cash is very expensive; it cost the government a lot to print, handle and distribute cash all over the country in terms of transport and security. The benefits of moving towards cash-less society are many including reduction of crime. Illegal transactions such as drugs trade and smuggling typically take place with cash to leave no trail.

Moving Tanzania towards a cashless economy is my top agenda. Vodacom has a vision to take Tanzania to the digital age, for me this means moving us to an economic state where bank notes or coins used in financial transactions gradually decline to pave the way for digital and mobile payments.

We continue to diversify M-Pesa products by coming up with innovative solutions for Tanzanians. We will also continue to grow the M-Pesa ecosystem through interoperability with financial institutions, businesses and government institutions thus pushing for financial inclusion. Our promise to our customer is to reach a point where they will

never need their wallets and handbags; all they need is their phone and a Vodacom simcard.

What is the secret behind M-Pesa's success in the market?

I believe people are the driving force behind M-Pesa's success. Our strongest asset is our team - I have a strong and motivated team who share the same vision as me. Businesswise we have the largest network with more than 106,000 M-Pesa agents which means we are everywhere. We have also invested a lot in our infrastructure, technology and marketing.

You are the first Tanzanian director of the M-Commerce department since it was established in 2008, what does it mean to you?

I vividly remember what my boss said to me upon appointment to this position; as the first Tanzanian to head a commercial unit at Vodacom, the investors were placing so much responsibility on me saying, 'You have to succeed and perform well because all eyes are on you,' so I carry the dreams of a nation, I have to prove that we Tanzanians can perform in large corporates. I am determined to performance at the highest standards possible.

Beyond career progression, what is more important about this position is my contribution to the company and the nation. I want to contribute positively to the development of the company and my country in terms of transforming lives, contribution to the economy and expanding access and scope of financial services.

Where do you see the future of mobile money in the country?

I am optimistic of future prospects as the government is encouraging growth in mobile money services to push financial inclusion. Mobile money is the secret to achieving this and attaining a cashless society. I also envision a future where mobile money ventures into strategic areas such as agriculture to see how we can help to further empower farmers through our financial services.

OPTIMISM

Fatema Abdallah: 'I'm hoping land in Tanzania will bring a windfall'

Fatema Abdallah is the founder of Bespoke Getaway Safaris, a travel venture that takes tourists to parts of Africa only the locals know. Abdallah, 31, grew up in Tanzania, and was always a nature lover, seeing the value of conservation from a young age. After graduating from The University of Waterloo in Canada in 2010, she worked as a university student experience officer for two years in Canada and Australia, before moving back to Tanzania in 2013 to work in the safari industry. With her parents being the founders of hotels and lodges in Tanzania, it dawned on her the industry was in her blood, pushing her to launch her own company with her husband, Kumail Somji, after moving to Dubai in 2017.



How did your upbringing shape your attitude towards money?

Growing up in Tanzania, we were often reminded of the day-to-day struggles that face many. Being the middle child of five, I clearly remember my parents always guiding and influencing us siblings to be smarter when it came to saving, enjoying and spending the money we were rewarded. My parents came from humble beginnings and after a few lucky strikes, their circumstances improved tremendously [with the growth of tourism in Tanzania]. They were comfortably providing for us above and beyond our needs through the family business.

How much did you get paid for your first job?

My parents are avid believers in getting the family involved in business in any way possible so my dad would have all the kids line up for work during the summer break. No vacation came without work and this was a necessary sacrifice my siblings and I understood. One

of my first memories of work was varnishing the outside deck of a lodge my father was building when I was only five years old. I don't remember my pay stub ever coming through but I do cherish the lessons I learned while having fun. My first official job was as a student experience officer at the University of Waterloo and then I transferred over to Australia in the same position at the University of Melbourne. I was paid roughly AU\$2000 (Dh5,128) a month and most of it is still sitting in a savings account in Australia.

Are you a spender or a saver?

I believe saving and investing is the best way to grow you as a person. The more you save, the more your wealth grows; inevitably the decisions on where to diversify investments are key. Over time, learning from your mistakes is the most valuable

lesson. And it never hurts to have a very well-stuffed cushion to fall back on when times are tough. And you will only realise the importance of this cushion the hard way, so it's best to be prepared.

What is your most cherished purchase?

I would like to think I have more than one. My husband and I have bought a piece of land somewhere remote in Tanzania, hoping for it to be a windfall one day. Besides that we have bought into many savings and investment plans that should yield good results in the future, we hope.

Where do you save?

Our savings range between stock, bonds and real estate. We save in different countries and make it a point to prioritise diversifying our portfolio.

What is your biggest financial milestone?

Definitely making the company see green in the first year. We began with very little overheads and expenses, but the fear of making a loss was unnerving. In hindsight I realise spending more in the early stages on the business would have allowed me more time to focus on growing the core business. I know this now and this has been a key change in our business strategy moving forward.

What has been your best investment?

A few years ago when I was in university I opened up a student savings account and made a deposit into the account. At the time the account manager said there was no point just leaving the money there so I invested in a financial company's stock. Today the stock is up 150 percent and my money has nearly tripled. I haven't cashed out yet as the company in question is extremely financially strong and is still a recommended buy by most analysts.

Do you use a financial adviser?

Yes, occasionally. It helps to get advice from experts in their fields. It is important to not rely on one source and trust your gut. When it comes to your money, ask as many questions as you need to.

Do you have any financial regrets?

Yes, not risking more money in order to achieve what I believed in. I knew Bespoke Getaway Safaris was set up for success, but I found myself constantly second guessing myself and that stopped me many times from spending a little more to achieve a lot more in return.

Do you plan for the future?

Yes. It is important to have a goal to help direct the focus of your personal and professional

life. The actual goals do change and I stay flexible to allow for circumstances and opportunities that are unexpected. As a student of yoga, I constantly remind myself of the importance of the present moment; learn from my past to make decisions in my present that will help guide my future.

What luxuries are important to you?

Travel, an active lifestyle, a comfortable home and healthy food. This may not be a luxury to some, but I think it is what is most important to keep your mind going in the right direction.

How much do you have in your wallet right now?

A couple of hundred dirhams max. I rarely carry any more cash with me as I am so used to just using my card or my phone for wireless payments. It has become so easy now, there are times I do not even bring out the wallet anymore.

What car do you drive?

I drive a Tesla Model S. I like to be environmentally friendly, and my husband is a geek for tech, so it works best for both of us.

What financial advice would you offer your younger self?

Spend more on experiences. The world is really so small now and we have the privilege of being able to travel anywhere from Dubai. Save up for a trip and go somewhere new to learn about people and a different way of life. I have encountered most of my mentors, friends, and life lessons whilst travelling. I truly believe we can change the world we live in through experiences we have when we travel.

What would you raid your savings account for?

The only reason would be to save someone near and dear to me, or myself, from an unexpected ailment or calamity.



COMPETENCE

John Manyike dismantles financial myths

JOHANNESBURG

John Manyike does not have a loud personality but he is a good example of a person who you shouldn't judge by his outward appearance.

The head of financial education at Old Mutual has earned a reputation for dismantling financial illiteracy myths that have plagued black people for generations. In an interview with City Press last week at the insurer's head office in Sandton, it was easy to see why he is considered one of the finest in the business.

The Soweto-born executive started his schooling at Ritavi Primary in Nkawkowa in Limpopo, when his family moved there from Soweto in the late 1970s. "I am probably the eighth of the 13 children that my father had by three wives. I am the fourth from my mother, who was his first wife. Coming from a Sesotho-speaking community in Soweto and moving to Nkawkowa, I lost a whole year because at first I couldn't speak the local language at all.

"I was very light-skinned

- what you would now call a yellow bone - and I was teased quite badly so I went to school for only half the year and refused to go back until the following year," he said. He matriculated at Bankuna High in the same area. He became a devout Christian at school. He also decided he wanted to work as a clerk.

"I wanted to work in an air-conditioned office, probably because my father had a similar job in Tzaneen. My mother was a resourceful entrepreneur, knitting curtains for a Jewish shop in town. I helped her by collecting orders and material," he said, laughing at the memory. He then experienced what he refers to as a defining moment in his life.

"I went to my father and told him the good news that I wanted to go to varsity. All he did was ask me one question: 'How many are you [in this family]?' That is all he said." His decision turned out to be nothing short of a leap of faith. "I went to my room, packed my bags and I had R50 with me. I hitchhiked to University of the North," he said.

DEAL

Barack and Michelle Obama sign podcast deal with Spotify

NEW YORK

Under a multi-year deal between the streaming platform and the Obama's company Higher Ground Productions, the former first couple will voice, produce and develop podcasts covering a wide range of topics.

The deal marks the Obama's first steps into the world of podcasts, with Spotify calling them "two of the world's most important voices."

In a statement, the former US president said: "We've always believed in the value of entertaining, thought-provoking conversation. It helps us build connections with each other and open ourselves up to new ideas. We're excited about Higher Ground Audio because podcasts offer an extraordinary opportunity to foster productive dialogue, make people smile and make people think, and, hopefully, bring us all a little closer together."

Michelle Obama added: "We're thrilled to have the opportunity to amplify voices that are too often ignored or silenced altogether, and

through Spotify, we can share those stories with the world. Our hope is that through compelling, inspirational storytelling, Higher Ground Audio will not only produce engaging podcasts, but help people connect emotionally and open up their minds – and their hearts."

It comes after the Obamas signed a deal with Netflix to produce a number of original, scripted and unscripted documentary series and films, after setting up Higher Ground Productions last year. Spotify will distribute the podcasts worldwide to its more than 217 million active users. Although it is yet to give any detail as to what the podcasts will cover, it has promised "a diverse slate of original podcasts."

"President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama are two of the world's most important voices," said Spotify chief content officer Dawn Ostroff. "It is a privilege to be working with them to identify and share stories that will inspire our global audience, which looks to Spotify for unique, breakthrough content."



Former President Barack Obama, right, and former first lady Michelle Obama have signed a podcast deal with Spotify. to the masses.

GREEN INVESTMENT

Abu Dhabi's Masdar brings renewable energy to Caribbean island

UNION ISLAND

A UAE project to bring renewable energy to a remote Caribbean island is a breath of fresh air to residents, who say the prospect of a cleaner environment "feels great."

For decades, residents of Union Island, part of St Vincent and the Grenadines, had to endure the noise and pollution that comes with a diesel power plant, as well as a coating of black soot over everything in their homes.

But in March, Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) inaugurated the island's first large-scale solar PV battery plant. It is part of the Caribbean Renewable Energy Fund, a US\$50 million (Dh183m) investment into clean energy projects for 16

countries in the region and is now supplying the island with enough clean energy to run entirely on renewables throughout the day.

"This is a step in the right direction," said Felix McKie, who moved to Union Island in 1971. He and his family live just 100 metres from the diesel-powered Union Island Power Station. "I hope that eventually they will be able to implement full solar power and move away from diesel because we have suffered tremendously with the soot and the noise," he said.

"But it is fantastic knowing that Union Island is leading the way in renewable energy for remote islands - and we are looking forward to the peace and quiet during the day."

CONCERN

Pakistani family hoping for Eid miracle to afford visa renewal fees

DUBAI

A man fighting to keep his wife and two children in the UAE, whose visas have expired, says he still has hope that he will come up with the money needed to stop his family from being separated.

Last week, The National reported that Ahmed Ali, 43, would be forced to send his family to their home country of Pakistan if he could not pay the Dh16,000 needed to sponsor them before their visas – that were granted to them under the UAE's amnesty scheme last year – expired on June 5.

The Abu Dhabi resident fell on hard times last year when he was imprisoned for a series of bounced cheques written in his name by a former colleague who then fled the country. He was left with Dh90,000 in court fines – which were paid off with the help of the Pakistani embassy and community – but still owes Dh117,000 to a former business acquaintance who filed a civil case against him when his cheque bounced.

Upon his release from prison in August last year, Mr Ali applied for a six-month visa extension for his family after theirs had expired. He applied during an amnesty period that mandated all overstay penalties be waived and had hoped to have enough money by now to be able to sponsor his family himself.

After his story was published, a few people came forward to offer help but Mr Ali is still shy of the Dh16,000 he needs. Sending his wife and sons home is not an option for him either, as he has calculated he will spend almost the same amount of money on their travel costs and accommodation in Pakistan.

His wife, Mehjabeen Ahmed, posted the story on Facebook, asking people for help but only a handful have come forward. "Around 13 people commented on the link,

three of them messaged me directly and said they will be chipping in once Eid is over," said Mr Ali.

"Another man already contributed Dh500 and a lady sent Eid toys for my children, which we are very grateful for." Mrs Ahmed also shared the story among her friends, of whom three said would try to help after Eid.

"Because now everybody is on vacation and people are preoccupied with their own affairs, inshallah once the public holiday is over more people will step up," said Mr Ali. Though his family's visa expired on Wednesday, Mr Ali is confident that they will manage. "Nothing can be done this week because it is a public holiday," he said.

Visa overstay charges begin with Dh100 on the first day and adds Dh25 for each additional following day. Mr Ali hopes the government will drop these charges for this week because it is Eid Al Fitr. When asked what he will do if he is unable to raise the money, Mr Ali sighed and said: "Hopefully I will manage."

"I don't know what I will do. I don't have a plan B but I will try my best in this coming week." While Mr Ali is focused on sponsoring his family, he faces a three-year jail term if he is unable to pay off the Dh117,000 he owes his former business acquaintance. "But I am not worried about that now," he said.

"I will go to the legal aid section at the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department next week to try to seek guidance. "My main concern is the visa renewal and then I can slowly manage everything else. "If my family has a visa, then I can run everywhere and manage. This is the situation." In the meantime, he plans to continue to spread his story in the hope that someone can help. "If nothing happens, I will have to take the decision to send them back."



Mahjabeen Ahmed, Mr Ali's wife, with their two sons, Ariz, 3, and Abban, 4.



ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY STARTING 7:30 PM

ITV

<p>TUESDAY 4 June 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Shamsham za pwani 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Shamsham za pwani 11:25 Igizo: Mtego 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Afya ya jamii rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Uchumi na biashara 13:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: TFDA 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela: Destiny (Destino) rpt 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 The great queen Seonduk 19:00 Jarida la wanawake 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:00 Tanzania yetu 21:30 Chetu ni chetu 22:15 Telenovela: Destiny (Destino) 23:00 Habari 00:30 CNN International</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 5 June 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Korean: The Great queen Seonduk 11:05 Habari za saa 11:15 Jagina 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt 13:00 Dakika 45 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Destiny (Destino) 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mizengwe rpt 19:30 Isidingo 19:00 Kipindi Maalum: TFDA 20:00 Habari 21:00 Aibu Yako! Hata wewe? 21:05 Tatu Mzuka 21:15 Kipindi Maalum: Uongozi 21:45 Kipindi Maalum: Tanesco 22:15 Telenovela: Destiny (Destino) 23:00 Habari</p>	<p>23:30 The Base 00:30 Al Jazeera 2:00 CNN International</p> <p>THURSDAY 6 June 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Igizo: Kivuko 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Igizo: Kivuko 11:15 Shamba Lulu 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Ijue Sheria 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Kipindi Maalum: Uongozi 13:30 Tanzania yetu 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Destiny (Destino) 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 19:00 Jagina 19:30 Usafiri wako 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:00 Malumbano ya hoja 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 CNN International</p> <p>FRIDAY 7 June 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Hawavumi lakini wamo 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Usafiri wako 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Jagina rpt 13:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 14:15 Telenovela rpt: Destiny (Destino) 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 The Base 17:30 Ibada ya kislamu 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe 18:30 Shamba lulu</p>	<p>19:00 Uchumi na biashara 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipima joto 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 CNN International</p> <p>SATURDAY 8 June 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto wetu 10:00 Mjue Zaidi rpt 11:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 11:30 Usafiri wako 12:00 Mapishi 12:30 Telenovela rpt: Destiny (Destino) 14:45 Igizo rpt: Kivuko 15:15 Igizo rpt: Elininyo 15:45 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe 16:00 Igizo rpt: Kimya Milele 16:30 Igizo: Mtego rpt 17:00 Shamsham za Pwani 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Igizo: Elininyo 19:00 Sanaa na wasanii 19:30 Jungu Kuu 20:00 Habari 21:00 Insta Moja 21:10 Igizo: Kimya Milele 21:40 Hawavumi lakini wamo 22:40 Isidingo rpt 01:00 CNN International</p> <p>SUNDAY 9 June 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 09:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Isidingo 11:45 Aibu Yako 11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo rpt 12:50 Bongo Movie rpt: Maisha 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo 15:00 Mwangaza 16:00 Korean drama: The great queen Seonduk 16:45 Igizo: Kivuko 17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Matukio ya wiki 19:30 Igizo: Mtego 20:00 Habari 21:00 Biko 21:10 Mizengwe 21:30 Mjue zaidi 22:15 Bongo Movie: Maisha 2 23:30 Telenovela rpt: Destiny (Destino)</p>	<p>Tues 4 June 06:00 Al Jazeera 08:00 CNN International News 09:00 Al Jazeera 10:00 Kumekucha 10:30 Kumekucha Michezo 11:30 Kumekucha Kishindo 12:00 The Decor rpt 12:30 Mizengwe rpt 12:45 Aibu Yako 13:00 Series rpt: Godwin 13:45 Series rpt: The Land of wind 14:15 Local pgm rpt: Business Edition 15:00 Bundesliga kick off 15:30 Out and About rpt 16:00 Capchat rpt 17:00 Usafiri wako rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 Innovation rpt 19:30 Jagina 19:30 Ripoti Maalum 20:00 Series: Godwin 20:45 Series: The Land of wind 21:30 Capital Prime 22:00 Turning the Spotlight rpt 22:30 Iron Chef rpt 23:30 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Wed 5 June 06:00 Al Jazeera 08:00 CNN International News 09:00 Al Jazeera 10:00 Kumekucha 10:30 Kumekucha Michezo 11:30 Kumekucha Kishindo 12:00 Turning the Spotlight rpt 12:30 Culinary delight rpt 13:00 Series rpt: Godwin 13:45 Series rpt: The Land of wind 14:30 Local Pgm: The Monday Agenda Rpt 15:15 Capchat rpt 16:15 CNN International 17:00 Innovation rpt 17:30 Meza Huru 19:00 Sports Gazette 19:30 Chetu ni chetu 20:00 Series: Godwin 20:45 Series: The Land of wind 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Dakika 45: 22:45 The Décor 23:15 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Thurs 6 June 06:00 Al Jazeera 08:00 CNN International News 09:00 Al Jazeera 10:00 Kumekucha 10:30 Kumekucha Michezo 11:30 Kumekucha Kishindo 12:00 Sports Gazette 12:30 Out n' about rpt 13:00 Series rpt: Godwin 13:45 Series rpt: The Land of wind 14:30 Business Edition rpt 15:00 Korean Drama rpt: Emperor of the sea 16:00 Dakika 45 rpt 17:00 In good shape 17:30 Meza Huru 19:00 Turning the spotlight 19:30 Tanzania yetu 20:00 Series: Godwin 20:45 Series: The Land of wind 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Capchat rpt</p>	<p>23:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Frid 7 June 06:00 Al Jazeera 08:00 CNN International News 09:00 Al Jazeera 10:00 Kumekucha 10:30 Kumekucha Michezo 11:30 Kumekucha Kishindo 12:00 Innovation rpt 12:30 The Decor rpt 13:00 Series rpt: Godwin 13:45 Series rpt: The Land of wind 14:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt 15:00 Korean Dram rpt: Emperor of the sea 16:00 CNN International 16:30 The Monday Agenda rpt 17:30 Meza Huru 19:00 Drive it 19:30 Eco@Africa 20:00 Aibu yako 20:15 Local Pgm: Business Edition 20:45 Series: The Land of wind 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Malumbano ya hoja rpt 00:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Sat 8 June 08:00 CNN International 09:00 Drive It rpt 09:30 Turning the Spotlight rpt 10:00 Culinary delight rpt 10:30 Innovation rpt 11:00 Out n' about rpt 11:30 Sports Gazette rpt 12:00 Usafiri wako rpt 12:30 Eco@Africa rpt 13:00 Business edition rpt 13:30 Korean Drama rpt: Emperor of the sea 14:30 Telenovela rpt: The Land of wind 17:15 Tanzania Yetu rpt 17:45 Bundesliga kick off 18:15 Capchat rpt 19:15 Mizengwe 19:30 The Decor 20:00 Iron Chef. 21:00 Out n' About 21:30 Movie: The last hitman 23:00 Grapes of Justice rpt 01:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Sun 9 June 08:00 CNN International 09:00 In good shape 10:00 Capchat rpt 11:00 Sports Gazette rpt 11:30 Iron chef rpt 12:00 Jagina rpt 12:30 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt 13:00 Shamba lulu 13:30 Series rpt: Godwin 15:15 Aibu yako 15:30 Drive it rpt 16:00 Dakika 45 rpt 16:45 Mizengwe rpt 17:00 The Decor rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 Turning the Spotlight rpt 19:30 Cookery pgm: Culinary Delights 20:00 Korean Drama rpt: Emperor of the sea 21:00 Shift 21:15 Capchat live 22:15 Series rpt: The Land of wind 00:00 Al Jazeera</p>
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CAPITAL

WORLD

End of May, Britain's PM steps down as Conservative leader

LONDON

BRITISH Prime Minister Theresa May steps down as leader of the governing Conservatives yesterday, officially triggering a contest to replace her that could see her party embrace a tougher stance on Brexit.

May announced she would step down last month after failing to deliver Britain's departure from the European Union on time, deepening a political crisis in a divided country struggling to move on from a 2016 referendum on Brexit.

She will continue to work as prime minister until her party elects a new leader, a crowded race that will be defined by Brexit and competing approaches on how to deliver Britain's biggest policy shift in more than 40 years.

"For the remainder of her time in office, she will be building on the domestic agenda that she has put at the heart of her premiership," her spokeswoman told reporters.

Later on Tuesday, May will exchange letters with the chairs of the influential 1922 Committee of Conservative

lawmakers, and will spend the day working in her home constituency, a haven she retreats to.

May, once a reluctant supporter of EU membership who emerged from the chaos after the 2016 referendum as the "steady" choice, steps down with her central pledge - to lead Britain out of the bloc and heal the country's divisions - unfulfilled.

Her team has been keen to shape her legacy beyond the Brexit failure, but she bequeaths to her successor a nation where traditional political divides are being eroded by strong beliefs on whether Britain should leave the EU, and how it should do so.

The contest to replace her has already been heating up for weeks, with candidates arguing over the rights and wrongs of a so-called no-deal

Brexit, or leaving the EU without a deal.

Official nominations will be received on June 10. The selection process should be completed by the end of July.

Former foreign minister Boris Johnson is the favorite to win. He champions a tougher stance on Brexit, saying Britain should leave with or without a deal by the new deadline of Oct. 31, and is trying to persuade Conservatives that he, a former London mayor, is the only candidate who could win a new national election for the Conservative Party.

Other front runners are playing catch up, with the current foreign minister, Jeremy Hunt, and environment minister Michael Gove taking a more moderate stance on Brexit.

Agencies



British Prime Minister Theresa May

UK's Brexit Party narrowly defeated in key electoral test

LONDON

BRITAIN'S upstart Brexit Party failed in its first attempt to win a seat in Parliament, narrowly losing early yesterday to the left-of-center Labour Party in a special election.

Labour candidate Lisa Forbes won the Peterborough constituency in eastern England by 683 votes over the Brexit Party's Mike Greene.

Forbes said the Brexit Party's defeat "shows that the politics of division will not win," though Labour's share of the vote fell sharply from the last election in 2017.

The governing Conservative Party, in disarray over Brexit and engulfed in a leadership battle, came third.

Prime Minister Theresa May to steps down as Conservative leader yesterday, defeated by her failure to take Britain out of the European Union on schedule. She will remain as prime minister for a few weeks while the party picks a successor. So far, 11 Conservative lawmakers are jostling to replace her.

The election result is a blow to the momentum of the months-old Brexit Party led by veteran euroskeptic politician Nigel Farage, which wants Britain to leave the EU on the currently scheduled date of Oct. 31, with or without a divorce deal.

That simple - critics say simplistic - message has resonated with Brexit-backing voters angry at the country's political deadlock. The party won almost a third of UK votes in last month's European Parliament election.

Farage's force was the bookies' favorite to win in Peterborough, a city that voted by 60% to leave the EU in Britain's 2016 Brexit referendum.

Despite the loss, Farage said the "massive result" showed that British politics had "fundamentally changed," with the stranglehold of big Conservative and Labour parties now broken.

In Thursday's vote in Peterborough - just as in last month's European election - both the Conservatives and Labour saw their vote share plummet, as voters on both sides of the Brexit divide punished them for the country's political impasse.

The beneficiaries are the Brexit Party and the strongly pro-EU Liberal Democrats and Greens, creating an unusually unstable and unpredictable political landscape.

Thursday's election was called after Peterborough's previous Labour lawmaker was jailed for lying about a speeding offense and then fired by a public petition. **Agencies**



Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage, right, and party candidate Mike Greene, have a drink at The Bull public house in Newborough prior to votes being counted in the Peterborough by-election, in Peterborough, England on Thursday. (AP)

Chinese president receives honorary doctorate from Russian university

ST. PETERSBURG

CHINESE President Xi Jinping was awarded an honorary doctorate from Russia's St. Petersburg State University on Thursday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the awarding ceremony.

Xi was warmly welcomed by Putin when arriving at the main building of the university. After visiting an exhibition on the university's cooperation with China, the two heads of state stepped into the auditorium together, where they were met with a standing ovation from the faculty members, students and guests present.

In a speech delivered after being awarded the certificate by the university's rector, Xi said he feels honored to receive an honorary doctorate from St. Petersburg State University.

The university, he said, is a world-renowned and time-honored academic institution which has made remarkable contributions to the scientific, cultural and educational development of Russia and the whole world, and

produced many sinologists excelling in both the Chinese language and culture.

Cooperation in education is an important way to help enhance people's understanding and friendship, Xi said, noting that the university's close exchanges and cooperation with its Chinese counterparts have promoted the Chinese culture in Russia as well as Russian studies in China.

Recalling that he witnessed the awarding of an honorary doctorate by Tsinghua University to Putin in April, he said Tsinghua University and St. Petersburg State University, respectively his and Putin's alma mater, are outstanding representatives of higher-education institutions in China and Russia.

Their conferring of honorary doctorates on the heads of state of each other's countries testifies to the close educational and cultural exchanges between the two sides, and demonstrates the high level of China-Russia relations, Xi added.

Xi expressed hope that the two countries will constantly expand



Chinese President Xi Jinping attends a ceremony at which he is awarded an honorary doctorate from Russia's St. Petersburg State University in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Thursday. (Xinhua)

educational exchanges and cooperation, promote their own fine culture, and learn from each other, so as to cultivate more talents for their respective development.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Russia, and their relations have entered a new era, Xi said.

Calling youth the hope of hu-

man progress and future of China-Russia friendship, Xi urged the young generations in both countries to courageously shoulder their responsibilities and work together to contribute to the development of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era.

Extending his congratulations, Putin said he is honored that Xi

was conferred an honorary doctorate by his alma mater.

Xi has made important contributions to advancing the profound development of Russia-China relations, launched a series of important initiatives with regard to international relations, and made personal efforts to advance their implementation, Putin said, noting that Xi's proposal of jointly building the Belt and Road has drawn international support and involvement.

Top-notch Russian academic institutions, including St. Petersburg State University, have carried out fruitful exchanges and cooperation with their Chinese peers, and the deepening mutual understanding is bound to further promote bilateral relations, he said. Following the awarding ceremony, Russian and Chinese students presented the two heads of state with oil paintings as gifts. The two leaders also visited the Mendeleev workshop together.

Xi is in Russia for a state visit and the 23rd St. Petersburg International Economic Forum at the invitation of Putin. **Xinhua**

US general says Mideast buildup prompted Iran 'step back'

BAGHDAD

IRAN has chosen to "step back and recalculate" after making preparations for an apparent attack against US forces in the Persian Gulf region, but it is too early to conclude the threat is gone, the top commander of American forces in the Mideast said on Thursday.

In an interview with three reporters accompanying him to the Gulf, Gen. Frank McKenzie said

he remains concerned by Iran's potential for aggression, and he would not rule out requesting additional US forces to bolster defenses against Iranian missiles or other weapons. "I don't actually believe the threat has diminished," McKenzie said. "I believe the threat is very real."

McKenzie (pictured), the head of US Central Command, and other military officials are trying to strike a balance between persuading Iran that the US is pre-



pared to retaliate for an Iranian attack on Americans, thus deterring conflict, and pushing so much military muscle into the Gulf that Iran thinks the US plans an attack, in which case it might feel compelled to strike preemptively and

thus spark war. Tensions between the US and Iran have worsened since President Donald Trump withdrew from a 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and several world powers, and reinstated sanctions on Tehran. Last month, in response to what American officials characterized as an imminent threat, the US announced it would rush an aircraft carrier and other assets to the region.

The US also blamed Iran for last month's attacks on oil tankers in a

United Arab Emirates port.

On Thursday, United Nations ambassadors from the Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Norway told UN Security Council members that investigators believe those attacks were led by a foreign state using divers on speed boats who planted mines on the vessels. They did not name Iran.

Earlier, the Saudi ambassador to the UN, Abdallah Al-Mouallimi, said Saudi Arabia also blames Iran for the sabotage. **Agencies**

China issues report on US gains from bilateral economic, trade cooperation

BEIJING

CHINA-U.S. trade has been mutually beneficial, and the United States has reaped substantial benefits from bilateral economic and trade cooperation, China's Ministry of Commerce said Thursday in a research report.

"China-U.S. economic and trade cooperation has reached unprecedented depth and breadth," said the report, noting that bilateral goods trade surged from 2.5 billion U.S. dollars in 1979 to 633.5 billion dollars last year.

Bilateral trade in services exceeded 125 billion dollars in 2018, and two-way direct investment totaled nearly 160 billion dollars in the past four decades.

OVERSTATED U.S. DEFICITS
China's surplus come mainly from labor-intensive products, and the country saw deficits for products including aircraft, integrated circuits, automobiles and agricultural products, as well as in service trade, showing both countries have capitalized

on their respective industrial advantages, it added.

"Strict control of the United States over exports to China is one of the important reasons for the trade deficit," the report read, adding that U.S. export control measures involve around 3,100 items in 10 categories, including mostly high-tech products.

If the United States liberalizes its export barriers against China to the same level as France, the U.S. trade deficit with China would narrow by a third, the report cited the analysis by

U.S. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

According to the joint study of Chinese and U.S. commerce authorities, the U.S. goods trade deficit data has long been overestimated, with a 21-percent overstatement for 2015, the report said.

Calculated with this percentage, the U.S. side's goods trade deficit of 419.2 billion dollars last year was overstated by 88 billion dollars.

As nearly 53 percent of China's goods trade surplus from the United

States came from processing trade, the actual U.S. deficit to China last year should be just 240.9 billion dollars, the report said.

To calculate trade deficit, trade in services should also be taken into account. Counting in cross-border service trade and service sales of affiliated institutions, overall U.S. trade deficit to China should be around 153.6 billion dollars, some 37 percent of U.S. figure for goods trade deficit to China, the report showed.

SUBSTANTIAL GAINS

Although China had a trade surplus, the bilateral trade benefits both sides, and the argument that the United States is being taken advantage of does not hold water, the report said.

China is one of the fastest growing markets for U.S. goods exports, with an average annual growth of 6.3 percent from 2009 to 2018, the report said, adding that the cumulative growth for the period was 73.2 percent, much higher than the average growth of 56.9 percent for other markets of the United States. **Xinhua**



Japan PM to visit Iran next week amid Persian Gulf tensions

TOKYO

JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will make a two-day visit to Iran from June 12, amid rising tensions in the Persian Gulf between the United States and Iran over an international nuclear agreement, Japanese government said on Thursday.

At a meeting of a lower house steering committee, it was provisionally decided that amid tensions in the region, Abe (pictured) would visit Iran with the prime minister believing he could help de-escalate the situation as Japan has friendly ties with both Washington and Tehran.

According to the outlines of the plan, Abe will meet with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

During the talks, the Japanese premier is likely to underscore Japan's hope

that Iran would stick to an international nuclear accord inked in 2015 between Iran and six major powers.

US President Donald Trump, however, has since pulled the US out of the international nuclear deal and restored sanctions against Tehran that were scrapped under the 2015 deal.

Before Abe's trip, government sources said that Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono will visit Iran to hold talks with his counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif.

China, Russia set paradigm for major-country relations

BEIJING

ONE week after Xi Jinping was elected Chinese president in 2013, he travelled to Russia for his first overseas visit as head of state.

Over the past six years, Xi and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, have met each other nearly 30 times. Such frequent meetings between two heads of state are rare in international diplomacy.

On Wednesday, Xi embarked on his eighth presidential trip to Russia, which bears unique significance given that the two countries are marking the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic ties, and the world is facing growing levels of uncertainty.

Putin, for his part, has traveled to China for nine times since Xi began his presidency. His last trip was to attend the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing in April, or less than two months ago.

In some of the most memorable moments, the two leaders honored each other with the highest medals of their countries, watched an ice hockey race between Chinese and Russian kids, and cooked traditional Chinese and Russian pancakes.

These intensive interactions have nurtured a close personal rapport between the two presidents, and attested to the closeness and robustness of the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between their countries -- a pair of good neighbors, good partners and good friends.

"After seven decades of development, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is now at its best in history," Xi said in an interview with Russian media on the eve of his visit.

In Xi's own words, 70 years on China-Russia ties have become a major-country relationship featuring the highest degree of mutual trust, the



Chinese president Xi Jinping awards his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin the first-ever Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing June 8, 2018. (File photo)

highest level of coordination and the highest strategic value.

Mutual trust is the solid foundation for the development of bilateral ties. It is immediately visible in the fruitful and colourful head-of-state diplomacy, which serves as a strategic compass for the China-Russia relationship.

Meanwhile, mutual trust is also growing among the two peoples.

In recent years, the two countries have been working together to boost people-to-people exchanges via programs like jointly setting up a university, con-

ducting media and think-tank seminars, and co-running Year of Tourism activities.

As a result, the two peoples have known each other better, and their friendship has grown stronger, offering ever sturdier public support for bilateral practical cooperation, notably in economic and trade sectors.

Trade between the two countries hit a record of more than 100 billion U.S. dollars last year. Cooperation in e-commerce, technology, finance and agriculture has developed rapidly.

Also, the two countries have seen their strategic major projects in such fields as energy, aerospace and interconnectivity making steady progress, including their first cross-border highway bridge, which is expected to complete in October.

The two countries have also been synergizing the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union, and offered staunch support for each other on issues concerning their respective core interests.

As two major countries on the world stage, the areas where Beijing and Moscow have been seeking to better coordinate with each other go beyond the bilateral dimension.

They have made concerted efforts to help solve the world's most pressing problems, including climate change, terrorism, the Iran nuclear issue, the Korean Peninsula issue, and the Syria crisis, on multilateral platforms like the United Nations, the G20, the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

When the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century, a steady China-Russia relationship bears high strategic value for each other, and provides an anchor for global stability.

In the face of growing protectionism, unilateralism and economic chauvinism, the global economic recovery is in serious jeopardy, the multilateral trading system is under attack, and the existing international order is challenged.

Beijing and Moscow agree and have joined hands to uphold an international system with the United Nations at the heart. They have also pledged to safeguard norms and principles widely acknowledged in the international community, and vowed to build a multipolar world and democratize international relations.

Also, China and Russia hold to a non-alignment policy that targets no third party. Such an approach is different from the Western-style military alliance, which has an innate need for an enemy -- real or imaginary -- and tends to put the entire world on edge.

In today's world, the China-Russia relationship can offer some inspirations for other major countries in the world in this new era of growing interdependence.

Xinhua

Algerian interim president calls for dialogue to solve crisis

ALGIERS

ALGERIAN interim President Abdelkader Bensalah on Thursday urged political parties and civil society representatives to launch a dialogue to get out of the political crisis that has been gripping the North African nation since February.

"I'm compelled (by the constitution) to remain in my post until the election of a new president to the country," Bensalah said in a message to the state-run ENTV channel, days after Constitutional Council cancelled the presidential election scheduled for July 4.

"I convene all political parties, civil society representatives, and all those who love Algeria to head toward dialogue before drawing up a road map based on consensual process which paves the way for organizing free and fair presidential elections," he added.

This is the second time Bensalah has called on political parties for dialogue, two months after his first failed after being snubbed by prominent figures and opposition parties.

On June 2, the Constitutional Council decided to cancel the presidential polls after it concluded that the two candidates who filed their bids did not meet the requirements.

Algeria has been plagued by widespread protests since Feb. 22, which forced former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to resign on April 2 and led to cancellation of the presidential election first scheduled for April 18, before demonstrators started to express their objection to holding election on July 4.

Now the demonstrators are demanding the departure of interim President Bensalah and Prime Minister Noureddine Bedoui, saying they belong to the regime of former President Bouteflika.

Xinhua

World marks 75 years since D-Day in solemn observances

OMAHA BEACH

THE five beaches are silent at dawn but forever haunted.

As the sun rose Thursday over the Normandy coastline where thousands of men bled and died 75 years ago, a fast-diminishing number of World War II veterans remembered D-Day and hoped the world never forgets the sacrifices made to dismantle Nazi tyranny.

The sea of mercury blue couldn't have been more peaceful as day broke over Omaha Beach, the first of five code-named beaches where the waters ran red the morning of June 6, 1944, when Allied forces came ashore to push the Nazis out of France.

Hundreds of people, civilians and military alike, hailing from around the world, gathered at the water's edge, awash in emotion.

On the western edge of Omaha, dense crowds formed a human chain and tossed red and white chrysanthemums into the gently lapping waves, remembering. At a statue of an infantryman clutching a rifle and hauling a fallen comrade that overlooks the sand, veterans' descendants spoke about their family members who fought on the beach and laid red roses at the feet of the statue.

A lone piper played in Mulberry Harbor, exactly 75 years after British troops came ashore at Gold Beach.

"It is sobering, surreal to be able to stand here on this beach and admire the beautiful sunrise where they came ashore, being shot at, facing unspeakable atrocities," said 44-year-old



Floral tributes are placed at the National Guard Monument Memorial as members of the USAREUR band plays in the background near Omaha Beach, in Normandy, France, on Thursday during commemorations of the 75th anniversary of D-Day. (AP)

former US paratrooper Richard Clapp, of Julian, North Carolina.

After Britain's spirited anniversary tribute Wednesday to the derring-do of the Allied forces that set off from England to defend democracy, France is hosting a series of solemn ceremonies Thursday in the country where so many young lives ended in sand and sea.

Leaders from the United States, Britain, Canada, France -- and then-foe and now-ally Germany -- will once again laud the troops who stormed the fortified Normandy beaches to help turn the tide of the war and give birth to a new Europe, since at peace.

Dick Jansen, 60, from the Netherlands, drank Canadian whisky from an enamel cup on the water's edge, where people held moments of silence and some saluted.

"Every time we come here, we drink at the moment they came onto the beach, a whisky for the

guys who came no further," he said.

Norwegian Sigrud Flaata drove from Oslo in a 1942 restored jeep to honor the soldiers who died on D-Day. Belgian Filip Van Hecke called his journey a "small effort to pay homage."

Remembrances are taking place throughout the day at the military cemeteries where countries buried their fallen citizens. Passing on memories is especially urgent, with hundreds of World War II veterans now dying every day.

A group of five Americans parachuted into Normandy on Wednesday as part of a commemorative jump, and showed up on the beach Thursday morning still wearing their jumpsuits, all World War II-era uniforms, and held an American flag. All five said they fear that the feats and sacrifices of D-Day are being forgotten.

French President Emmanuel Macron and US President Don-

ald Trump will look out over Omaha Beach, the scene of the bloodiest fighting, from the cemetery with grave markers for over 9,000 Americans, servicemen who established a blood bond between the US and its trans-Atlantic allies.

"I have all kinds of friends buried," said William Tymchuk, 98, who served with the 4th Canadian Armored Division during some of the deadliest fighting of the brutal campaign after the Normandy landings.

"They were young. They got killed. They couldn't come home," Tymchuk, who was back in Normandy, continued. "Sorry," he said, tearing up. "They couldn't even know what life is all about."

The biggest-ever air and seaborne invasion took place on D-Day, involving more than 150,000 troops that day itself and many more in the ensuing Battle of Normandy. Troops started landing overnight from the air, then were joined by a massive force by sea on the beaches code-named Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold, carried by 7,000 boats.

In that defining moment of military strategy confounded by unpredictable weather and human chaos, soldiers from the US, Britain, Canada and other Allied nations applied relentless bravery to carve out a beachhead on ground that Nazi Germany had occupied for four years.

"The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory," Gen Dwight D Eisenhower predicted in his order of the day.

Agencies

As Mexico-US talks progress, markets rise on hopes a deal could be close

WASHINGTON/MEXICO CITY

MEXICAN and U.S. officials held a second day of talks on trade and migration on Thursday, with markets rebounding on optimism a deal could be close, although it was unclear if Mexican pledges to curb migration flows were enough to persuade the Trump administration to postpone tariffs.

U.S. President Donald Trump has warned that tariffs of 5% on all Mexican exports to the United States will go into effect on Monday if Mexico does not step up efforts to stem an increase in mostly Central American migrants heading for the U.S. border.

Bilateral talks in Washington began on Wednesday to attempt to strike a deal, with the Mexican government, U.S. business groups and even many of Trump's fellow Republicans keen to avert the tariffs, the prospect of which has rattled global financial markets.

U.S. stocks, oil and Treasury yields rose on Thursday afternoon on indications the two sides were getting closer.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said Mexico had offered "more" on Thursday than on Wednesday but that it would be up to Trump - who returns from a European trip on Friday - to decide if it were enough.

"There has been some movement on their part. It's been encouraging," he said. "The discussions are going to continue in the days ahead."



Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard (pictured) told reporters the Mexican government had offered to send 6,000 members of the National Guard to secure its southern border with Guatemala.

In a sign of a wider crack-down, the leftist administration of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said earlier that it blocked the bank accounts of 26 people for alleged links to human trafficking, while it detained on Wednesday at least 350 migrants crossing into Mexico and arrested two prominent migrant rights activists.

Ahead of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Trump is eager to show progress on his 2016 campaign pledges to take a hard line on immigration. Apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border hit a decade high in May.

Brad Parscale, Trump's 2020 campaign manager, tweeted on Thursday: "Mexico sent representatives to Washington as

soon as President @realDonaldTrump announced possible tariffs. We are expected to have over 1 MILLION people arrive at our Southern Border this year. Dems are playing games with the border. The president is not!"

U.S.-Mexico migration talks will continue on Friday, Ebrard said.

If the tariffs go ahead, the United States would be in a serious trade dispute with both China and Mexico - two of its three top trading partners.

Trump said on Thursday he would decide later this month whether to carry out his threat to hit Beijing with tariffs on at least \$300 billion in Chinese goods.

Officials of the U.S. Federal Reserve and International Monetary Fund separately warned on Thursday that global trade tensions and rising tariffs posed an increasing risk to decades of U.S. expansion, as well as to the global economy.

Analysts warn that tariffs could spark a recession in Mexico. Credit ratings agency Fitch downgraded Mexico's sovereign debt rating on Wednesday, citing trade tensions among other risks, while Moody's lowered its outlook to negative.

The White House has drafted a document for Trump that would declare a new national emergency to implement the Mexican tariffs, according to a copy of the order seen by The Hill newspaper.

Agencies

Green light on 5G commercial use to fast-track China's connected future

BEIJING

CHINA officially approved 5G commercial services on Thursday, marking the start of a smart new era as the application of the superfast wireless technology helps connect more things, services and market players.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) granted commercial-use 5G licenses Thursday to China

Broadcasting Network and the country's top three telecom operators -- China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom.

A SMART FUTURE

5G can be about 100 times faster than the current 4G technology.

"It's like rocket speed," said Lin Jun, an insurance salesman who experienced the technology in the country's first 5G telecom

service hall in downtown Beijing by downloading a 1.5-hour high-definition movie in just four seconds.

"Playing mobile games is also so smooth," Lin added.

In addition to enhancing the experience for personal use, 5G will help make public life in education, medical services and other fields, as well as the industrial sector, smarter as local governments and firms expedite

the development and application of the technology.

Some metro lines in places including Beijing and Zhengzhou are now covered with the 5G network, while doctors in Shanghai and Guangdong are using 5G to help carry out diagnosis and even operations.

China Mobile said it plans to offer 5G services in over 40 cities by the end of September. The technology's commercial-

ization might generate 10.6 trillion yuan (about 1.53 trillion U.S. dollars) worth of direct economic output and over 3 million jobs from 2020 to 2025, according to a report by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT).

THE CHINA EDGE

A latecomer in most of the previous mobile communications technologies, China has seen

leapfrogging development in 5G technology. China was a pioneer in conducting 5G technology research and development (R&D) and has been accelerating the R&D and industrialization of 5G equipment in recent years.

The country ranks among the top echelon worldwide in 5G medium frequency band equipment, terminal chips and smartphones, according to Gong Daning, a senior engineer with

the CAICT. Chinese companies had topped the global rank in terms of the number of 5G standard essential patent applications by May, accounting for over 30 percent of the world's total.

Analysts attribute China's fast progress in 5G technology to Chinese firms' heavy R&D spending, the country's increasingly sound mobile communications industrial chain and an expanding market.

Xinhua



Musician R. Kelly, right, arrives at the Leighton Criminal Court building for an arraignment on 11 new sex-related felonies Thursday, June 6, 2019, in Chicago. Thursday's hearing comes a week after prosecutors announced the new counts, including four of aggravated criminal sexual assault. (AP Photo)

R. Kelly pleads not guilty to additional sex charges

CHICAGO

R&B singer R. Kelly pleaded not guilty to 11 additional sex-related charges on Thursday, including four counts that carry a maximum prison term of 30 years in prison.

Prosecutors did not ask the judge to raise the bond amount for Kelly during the brief hearing in Cook County court.

Kelly stood with his hands folded in front of him and listened to Judge Lawrence Flood describe the charges to him. When Flood asked if he understood, Kelly, responded, "Yes, sir." The Grammy award-winning singer, who has denied any wrongdoing, left without speaking to reporters. A status hearing was scheduled for June 26.

Among the 11 new counts are four counts of aggravated criminal sexual assault, which carries a sentence of up to 30 years in prison. That is more than four times as long as the maximum term for each of the 10 counts Kelly was originally charged with in February.

Kelly's defense attorney, Steve Greenberg, said after the hearing that he couldn't speculate as to why prosecutors brought the new charges, which pertain to one of the four women he was charged in February with sexually abusing years ago, three of whom were minors when the alleged abuse occurred.

"It's the same case. It's just that they've just changed what they've charged him with," Greenberg said. "It's the same facts ... the same bond, the same evidence. We expect the same result."

Asked how Kelly is coping, Greenberg said, "It's tough. Everything is against him."

Kelly's spokesman, Darryll Johnson, told reporters that Kelly is "upbeat."

"Initially, he was a little depressed," Johnson said. "But I mean, with anything, if someone accuses you of something, you'll be depressed. He knows the truth."

According to the new indictment, the first eight counts are from encounters that allegedly occurred between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31, 2010. Three others pertain to alleged encounters between May 1, 2009, and Jan. 31, 2010.

Among other things, prosecutors allege that Kelly used force or threatened to do so to pressure the accuser into sex or to perform oral sex on him. Since she was underage at the time, the statute of limitations for bringing charges was extended to 20 years from her 18th birthday, they wrote.

A woman has come forward to say publicly that 11 new felony counts stem from allegations she made about the R&B singer.

Jerhonda Pace wrote on her Facebook page that she's the accuser identified as "J.P." in court documents. Anticipating an angry reaction by Kelly's fans, Pace - one of four women Kelly is charged with sexually abusing - wrote that "no matter how 'wrong' you think I am, the law is on my side, a MINOR at the time."

The Associated Press doesn't usually name alleged victims of sexual assault, but Pace has gone public with her allegations.

AP

Dstv now to telecast AFCON 2019 games live in Kiswahili

BY GUARDIAN REPORTER

As the eagerly awaited 2019 AFCON finals, which will be played in Egypt, draw closer, MultiChoice Tanzania has announced it will broadcast all 52 matches of the tournament live through Supersport Channels on Dstv.

MultiChoice Tanzania Managing Director, Jacqueline Woiso, presided over the launch of Dstv AFCON's special campaign, dubbed We are In!, in Dar es Salaam this week.

Jacqueline said they have made the necessary efforts to make sure that Tanzanians get the chance to watch all 52 games of the showpiece live and in High Definition format.

"We are set for the live broadcast of all matches and, most importantly, all of the games will be available from the lowest bouquets, Dstv Bomba, at 19,000/-," she disclosed.

MultiChoice Tanzania Head of Marketing, Ronald Shelukindo, who also attended the launch, said Dstv customers can now enjoy the tournament and all other Dstv channels on the go by downloading the Dstv Now application.

He added one account in the application can be used by up to four different people at the same time at no extra package fee.

"When we say we need many Tanzanians to watch the tournament we mean it. With Dstv Now application at no additional package fee, you can watch the games on your smart phone, laptop,



Tanzania's presenters (L-R) Aboubakar Liongo, Edo Kumwembe, Salama Jabir and Oscar Oscar, pose for a photo during the of Multichoice Tanzania's launch of the company's plan to telecast Africa Cup of Nations' matches live. The event took place in Dar es Salaam this week. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

tablet or on your standard Television at the same time," he said.

MultiChoice, moreover, introduced a team of renowned Swahili commentators who will give commentaries during the tournament.

Shelukindo said: "We do not want Tanzanians to just see the matches with English, Spanish or Portuguese commentaries, we need Tanzanian to watch live and listen to Swahili com-

mentaries and this is the reason behind commissioning our own Tanzanians for this assignment."

The list of Supersport Kiswahili commentators includes, for the first time, a female presenter Salama Jabir, who is now joining the renowned commentators, Aboubakar Liongo, Ibrahim Masoud, Edo Kumwembe, Maulid Kitege and Oscar Oscar.

Speaking during the event,

Director of Sports Development in the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts, and Sports Omar Singo commended MultiChoice Tanzania for its efforts in supporting sports in the country.

He also commended Dstv for making sure that all of AFCON matches are available on the lowest package, as well as opting for the use of Kiswahili commentaries.



In this photo taken Wednesday, June 5, 2019, referee Marc Davis, left, gestures toward Golden State Warriors investor Mark Stevens, partially obscured in blue shirt, during the second half of Game 3 of basketball's NBA Finals between the Warriors and the Toronto Raptors in Oakland, Calif. An NBA spokesman said Thursday the conduct of Stevens at Game 3 of the NBA Finals was "beyond unacceptable." NBA Executive Vice President for Communications Mike Bass says that Stevens will not be permitted to attend games until the review of the matter is complete. The Warriors had already said he wouldn't be attending any more games in this series. (AP Photo)

Warriors' investor banned for 1 year, fined \$500,000 by NBA

OAKLAND, CALIF.

TORONTO guard Kyle Lowry wanted the Golden State Warriors' executive who shoved him during an NBA Finals game ousted from the league.

The NBA decided a one-year ban and \$500,000 fine is enough for now.

Mark Stevens, a Warriors' investor and a member of the team's executive board, was banned from the NBA for one year and fined Thursday - one day after he shoved Lowry during the fourth quarter of Game 3 of the Toronto-Golden State finals matchup. The NBA announced its decision not long after Lowry said Stevens "shouldn't be a part of our league."

"Mr. Stevens' behavior last night did not reflect the high standard that we hope to exemplify as an organization," the Warriors said in a release. "We're extremely disappointed in his actions and, along with Mr. Stevens, offer our sincere apology to Kyle Lowry and the Toronto Raptors organization for this unfortunate misconduct."

Lowry dove into a row of court-side

seats in an effort to save a loose ball. Stevens, wearing an NBA-issued credential, was seated about two spots away from where Lowry landed. Stevens shoved Lowry in the upper body, and Lowry said he repeated a vulgar phrase to him about four times during the brief incident.

The incident, and the fallout, was the dominant story on the off day between Games 3 and 4 of the series, which resumes Friday.

"It sucks that this has to take the front page of the finals," Lowry said. "It's been a fun finals. It's been a competitive finals. It really sucks that this has to take part and had to be a part of it."

Warriors players and coaches lauded the way Lowry was able to keep his emotions in check, and many followed their team's statement and offered apologies to both the Raptors and their point guard.

"Obviously, when you see the video, it's pretty clear who was in the wrong," Warriors guard Stephen Curry said, who added that he doesn't personally know Stevens.

It's unclear how large a stake Stevens has in the Warriors, and if

the team will allow him to remain part of the organization. The team's media guide lists Stevens - a Silicon Valley billionaire - as a member of the six-person executive board.

"A team representative must be held to the highest possible standard and the conduct of Golden State Warriors investor Mark Stevens last night was beyond unacceptable and has no place in our league," NBA spokesman Mike Bass said Thursday.

Lowry said Stevens has not reached out to him to apologize. Stevens, however, released a statement through the Warriors later Thursday saying he attempted to reach out and offer a direct apology to Lowry, the Raptors and the Warriors.

"I don't know him. I don't care to know him," Lowry said. "He showed his true colors at the time. And you show what you're really about in that time and at that moment. ... No, you showed what you really are."

Stevens said he accepted the punishment from the NBA.

"I made a mistake and I'm truly sorry," Stevens said. "I need to be better and look forward to making it right."

Lowry scored 23 points in Toronto's 123-109 victory. The Raptors lead the series 2-1 going into Friday's Game 4 at Oracle Arena.

Thursday's series of events began with an apology from the Warriors and an announcement that Stevens would not be allowed at any more games in this series. Players like Los Angeles Lakers standout LeBron James said that wasn't enough, and James reached out to Lowry personally to offer his support. Hours later, the NBA came out with the decision to fine and ban Stevens.

The NBA's ban covers all league games and also forbids Stevens from being part of any team events.

"If Kyle was to then hit back, a lot more than a fine would have then happened to Kyle," Warriors forward Draymond Green said.

This was not the first high-profile incident between players and fans this season.

Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook was involved in at least two such scenes during the regular season, one of them leading to a fan's permanent ban from all events at the arena the Utah Jazz call home. Westbrook

reacted angrily after he said a fan at a Utah game made racist comments to him, and the league fined Westbrook \$25,000 for responding in a vulgar manner.

Westbrook also was touched by a young fan who was seated courtside at another game, and reacted calmly.

While not a player-fan exchange, New York Knicks owner James Dolan made headlines when a fan at Madison Square Garden told him to "sell the team" in an incident that was captured on video. Dolan told the fan he was rude, asked if he wanted to come to any more games and then told him to "enjoy watching them on TV." And earlier in these playoffs, Raptors fan Drake actually massaged Toronto coach Nick Nurse's shoulders during play - to the dismay of the league.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said the league has "redoubled" efforts to make sure that fans understand what conduct is appropriate and what isn't.

"We have had lots of conversations directly with the players' association, the players, because absolutely we want them to feel that they're in a safe

environment," Silver said last week in Toronto when the NBA Finals were beginning. "And we don't want them to be distracted during the game or think that they have to take matters into their own hand."

But Raptors star Kawhi Leonard said more needs to be done.

"We have to do a better job, the NBA, just of making sure these fans don't come in and think they can just touch guys and hit them," Leonard said. "That's a little extreme."

Lowry said fans who sit inches from the sideline or baseline should understand that they may get in on the action. Dwyane Wade famously fell on entertainment icons John Legend and Chrissy Teigen as they sat courtside for his final home game with the Miami Heat two months ago; luckily in that case, all three parties could laugh about it afterward.

This was no laughing matter, and the Raptors were stunned to learn that Stevens was part of the Warriors' organization.

"I was shocked," Toronto guard Danny Green said. "And a little appalled."

AP

Neymar testifies in Brazil about posting accuser's photos

BRASILIA, BRAZIL

SOCCER star Neymar testified for almost two hours in the Rio de Janeiro police headquarters Thursday in a cybercrimes investigation linked to a woman's rape allegation against him.

Brazilian soccer confederation reported earlier that Neymar had received a subpoena to speak with authorities about his posting on social media of images and messages of the accuser without her authorization in possible violation of her online privacy.

Neymar arrived to testify shortly after 7 p.m. local time and left shortly before 9 p.m. He spoke to journalists afterward at the police headquarters but didn't provide any details about his testimony in the alleged cybercrime case.

"I only want to thank the support and messages that everybody sent," said the player, who was using crutches because of his injured right ankle.

Neymar is expected to speak to authorities in the next few days about the rape allegation, which is being investigated separately in Sao Paulo, where the woman filed a formal complaint with police Friday. The complaint alleges the Brazilian soccer star raped her in a Paris hotel room May 15. A doctor gave a statement to Sao Paulo police Thursday about a medical examination he gave the accuser.

Neymar denies any wrongdoing. After word of the woman's allegation became known, the player shared social media posts meant to show that the accuser had sent him friendly messages following the alleged rape.

Neymar departed from the Brazil national team's hotel in the capital

of Brasilia on Thursday and boarded a jet shortly afterward. He left the squad after injuring his right ankle in a friendly match against Qatar on Wednesday held as a warmup for the Copa America soccer tournament.

The accuser, Najila Trindade, a 26-year-old model, made her first public comments about her charge this week, telling two Brazilian television stations that Neymar raped her and engaged in "aggression," or physical violence.

The Associated Press doesn't name alleged sexual assault victims unless they make their identities public, which Trindade did in the TV interviews.

She told the SBT channel that Neymar became aggressive after she refused to have unprotected sex with him. She said the player had sexual intercourse with her despite her refusal and hit her repeatedly.

"I said: 'Stop it, stop it, stop it.' He did not communicate, he just acted," Trindade said.

Meanwhile, a video emerged on social media Thursday night that appears to show Neymar and his accuser in a physical altercation. It is unclear how or when the video was made, and the AP has no way of verifying it.

Neymar da Silva Santos, Neymar's father and agent, said the new video is evidence that his son was set up by Trindade.

Trindade denied that during her TV appearances. "I wouldn't expose myself this way to take money from Neymar. There is no logic, there is no sense," she told one interviewer.

One of her attorneys said she will testify in Sao Paulo on Friday.

AP

Nike 'very concerned' about rape accusation against Brazilian soccer star Neymar

RIO DE JANEIRO

NIKE Inc is "very concerned" about a rape accusation against Brazilian soccer star Neymar, the world's largest sportswear maker said on Thursday, raising questions about its sponsorship of one of the sport's most famous players.

Nike issued a statement a day after a woman said in an interview with Brazilian SBT TV that Neymar had raped her in a Paris hotel last month. Neymar denied the allegation in an Instagram post and has said the woman was trying to extort him.

The lawyer for Neymar's accuser did not respond to questions from Reuters.

"We are very concerned by the recent allegations and will continue to closely monitor the situation," Nike said when asked about the accusation against Neymar, who plays his club soccer with French champions Paris Saint-Germain.

A press representative for Neymar declined to comment on his sponsorships.

Neymar's lawyer Mayra Fernandes, speaking to journalists in Rio de Janeiro on Thursday, did not address his sponsorship deals. She said her client was innocent of the allegation made against him.

A press representative for Mastercard in Brazil confirmed to Reuters that the company had planned an advertising campaign to coincide with this month's Copa America tournament but she did not confirm reports in Brazil's three biggest newspapers that Mastercard had decided to suspend Neymar's featuring in it.

U.S. press representatives for Mastercard did not reply to requests for comment.

Brazilian airline Gol Linhas Aereas Inteligentes SA, which featured Neymar in the run-up to the 2018 World Cup, said it was a sponsor of the national team but not individual players. A press representative declined to comment on the accusation against Neymar.

REUTERS

Dutch revival continues with De Jong at the heart

GUIMARAES, PORTUGAL

RONALD Koeman's Netherlands team continued their impressive renaissance on Thursday by earning a place in the inaugural Nations League final with a 3-1 triumph over England after extra time to secure a meeting with hosts Portugal.

It was a victory that came courtesy of two dreadful errors from England in the extra period and thanks to the intervention of a VAR review that cancelled out what could have been a winner for Gareth Southgate's side in the 83rd minute.

But the specifics of the deciding goals – after the game was level at 1-1 in 90 minutes – should not take away from the achievement of Koeman's team in setting up a fascinating clash with Cristiano Ronaldo and company on Sunday in Porto.

A year on from a World Cup the Dutch watched from home having failed to qualify, their young side now have a chance of winning UEFA's new tournament and, whatever status that brings, Koeman cannot be anything but delighted with their progress.

To reach the last four in Portugal, the Netherlands had to finish top of a group with 2018 World Cup winners France and four-times world champions Germany – beating both on home soil.

Then the Dutch had to come from behind on Thursday against an England team that reached the semi-finals in the last World Cup in Russia and came into this competition with a real sense that they could win their first major silverware since 1966.

While England will rue their defensive errors, the Netherlands certainly showed why they are going to be genuine contenders in next year's European Championship.

Although much of the buzz around the Dutch has focused, rightly, on the young talent in an exciting Ajax Amsterdam team that reached the Cham-



England's Kyle Walker scores an own goal and Netherlands' second during the UEFA Nations League Semi Final match between Netherlands and England, at Estadio D. Afonso Henriques, in Guimaraes, Portugal, on Thursday. Photo: Agencies

pions League semi-finals this season, Koeman has been able to blend them with an experienced core.

Champions League winner Virgil van Dijk at the back is a once in a generation quality centre-half, while in midfield his Liverpool team mate Georginio Wijnaldum combines technical skill with a physical presence and football brain.

At left back Daley Blind delivered a composed and assured performance that must have left Manchester United fans wondering if their struggling club let him go too soon.

DE JONG'S QUALITY
But the player who stood out at a rainy Estadio Afonso Henriques, was the 22-year-old central midfielder Frenkie de Jong who will move from Ajax to Barcelona next month.

In a game with more than the amount of mistakes expected at this level, De Jong's consistent quality shone through.

In the bustle of midfield, his touch was light, his vision sharp and his delivery precise, while everything about his display suggested that this is a player ideally suited to continue the fine tradition of Dutch players at the Nou Camp.

De Jong controlled the tempo, bringing in the wide players and utilising the pace of Memphis Depay on the break, but also slowing things down and taking the sting out of England's spells of dominance.

At the back, Matthijs de Ligt recovered from the poor control which forced him to give away the penalty which Marcus Rashford converted to put England ahead in the 32nd minute.

He made amends with a thundering header from a corner in the 73rd which brought the Dutch level but he also showed as the game went on why most of Europe's top clubs want his services.

If there is a weakness in this Netherlands side it is in attack. Depay may have rebuilt his once floundering career since moving from Manchester United to Olympique Lyonnais but he would benefit from a bigger goal threat alongside him.

That absence of sharpness up front was compensated for by England's shocking defensive mistakes in extra time when a John Stones error resulted in Kyle Walker scoring an own goal and Ross Barkley gave the ball away to allow Quincy Promes to score.

The Dutch can expect fewer gifts from the hosts on Sunday.

The Netherlands have though brought style and class to the beautiful game since the 1970s and those who have appreciated their football across the decades can only be pleased to see them moving back to the upper echelons once again.

REUTERS

Koeman praises De Ligt's recovery from first half mistake

GUIMARAES, PORTUGAL

RONALD Koeman was delighted at the way teenager Matthijs De Ligt recovered from a first-half mistake to help the Netherlands to a 3-1 win over England in their Nations League semi-final on Thursday.

The Dutch coach said he saw no need to talk to the 19-year-old central defender at halftime about how he failed to control an easy pass and then tripped England's Marcus Rashford to give away a penalty in the 32nd minute.

De Ligt, who despite his age captained the Ajax team which reached the Champions League semi-finals this season, turned from villain to hero in the second half, however, by equalising with a trademark header from a corner.

"I didn't say anything at halftime ... everyone knows what kind of mistake this is, so I didn't see any need to discuss it," Koeman told reporters.

"It's great he corrected his own mistake and headed the equaliser. It shows we all make mistakes ... I don't know what Matthijs was thinking but maybe we will have a chat later."

He was also pleased with the performance of Frenkie de Jong, 22, who controlled the tempo in midfield.

"People are always looking what he's doing with the ball, how calm he is, but there's also a defensive side -- he wins so many balls. He makes it look easy," he said.

Koeman, however, was not entirely satisfied.

"There was a lot of space between their defence and midfield but we had to do a little bit more on the ball when we were in the final third of the field," he added.

"We had more possession and shots on goal, but the last ball was often too sloppy."

The Dutch missed out on last year's World Cup finals but have improved vastly under Koeman, finishing ahead of Germany and France to reach the Nations League semi-finals. They face Portugal in Sunday's final.

"We don't stop after tonight," he said. "There is always something to improve, but we are on a good path and the team is happy and confident in the way we play."



Netherlands' Matthijs de Ligt celebrates scoring their first goal against England during their UEFA Nations League Semi Final match at Estadio D. Afonso Henriques, in Guimaraes, Portugal, on Thursday. Photo: Agencies

"We have big, big talents in the system ... there is experience in the team, we have two players who have won the Champions League, we have gained more experience today that makes things easier."

Meanwhile, England manager Gareth Southgate was left to rue two shocking defensive errors in extra time which gifted the Netherlands a 3-1 win in the Nations League semi-finals on Thursday but he refused to put the blame on his players.

John Stones was caught in possession on the edge of the area which led to the goal that saw the Dutch go 2-1 up and then put Ross Barkley under pressure with a needless short pass that the midfielder misplaced

to hand the Netherlands their third goal.

"Fatigue has played a part tonight, and a lack of match sharpness," said Southgate, who added that his commitment to playing the ball out from the back was not to blame.

"I'm asking them to play a tough game at the back - if we didn't play that way we wouldn't be here," he told reporters.

"The Netherlands also made a huge mistake at the back tonight," he said, referring to Matthijs de Ligt giving away a penalty for the first goal. "We didn't lose because of how we wanted to play; we lost because of poor execution and fatigue."

The defeat makes it four losses in

their last four semi-final appearances in competitive tournaments for England including the 1990 and 2018 World Cup and Euro '96.

"We talked before the match about the incredible games England have been involved in past tournaments. We were up against a high level of opponent but we solved the problems they posed. We just made too many mistakes in our third," said Southgate.

England had their moments of dominance and some strong individual displays.

"After the equaliser I thought we were in control, we switched things a bit and got Raheem (Sterling) more involved. Then they got their second."

"We've learned so much from tonight. Declan Rice stood out, Ross Barkley I felt was outstanding. People are disappointed but I have to look at the bigger picture," he said.

England have gone from a team struggling to reach the latter stages of tournaments for over 20 years to a side involved at the last four stage twice in two years.

"We've improved enormously as a team. Tonight we could have been preparing for qualifying matches but we're not, we're in another semi-final," added Southgate.

"Again, we haven't quite got across the line but we've got some young players who have gained great experience."

REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Dutch revival continues with De Jong at the heart

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MONDAY

11:00 EATV LIVE
12:00 PUNCHLINE
14:00 UTAGE
15:00 SHIRAZI
17:00 BULEKI
17:30 SILEKHA
18:00 MASHA
18:30 MASHA
19:00 KALIPALI
21:00 EATV LIVE
21:30 REPORTS LIVE
22:00 KICHWA HITA

eastafrika RADIO
DAR ES SALAAM

05:00 EA Breakfast
09:00 Supamke
12:00 Kibanga Xtra
13:00 Kibanga Xtra
14:00 EA Drive
15:00 EA Drive
17:00 MASHA
17:00 MASHA

88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM

Losing to Bangladesh not a 'shock', says England's Plunkett

LONDON

BANGLADESH are no longer minnows and losing to them in the World Cup cannot be considered a 'shock' anymore, England fast bowler Liam Plunkett has said ahead of Saturday's match in Cardiff between the two sides.

Bangladesh sprang an early surprise in the tournament by defeating South Africa on Sunday and the Asian side have also beaten England in World Cup matches in 2011 and 2015.

"We saw Bangladesh beat South Africa and it wasn't a shock defeat," Plunkett told a news conference. "I remember when they beat England way back when and it was a shock defeat."

"But there are no real shock defeats in this competition. They're a strong squad."

England won their first game comprehensively against South Africa but lost by 14 runs to Pakistan in the second and Plunkett said the sides from the sub-continent had a tendency to get under their skins.

"Pakistan are pretty good like that, they can get niggly," Plunkett, 34, added. "Similarly Bangladesh and India are good at doing that. They are good at appealing quite a lot, it's just the way they play their cricket."

"But we've played in big competitions... around the world at the Indian Premier League and (Australia's) Big Bash in front of big crowds, so it shouldn't be too much for the players."

In another development, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has asked India's Mahendra Singh Dhoni to remove an army insignia from his wicketkeeping gloves, forcing New Delhi to weigh in after a nationalistic furore in the country.

Dhoni, one of the game's biggest stars, is an honorary lieutenant colonel in the territorial army and sported its dagger insignia on his gloves during India's opening match against South Africa in the World Cup, hosted by England and Wales.

The ICC said its clothing and equipment rules allow only manufacturers' logos on gloves, and that Dhoni or the Indian team had not sought any permission to sport the badge.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationalist government on Friday urged the country's cricket board (BCCI) to sort out the matter.

"The government does not interfere in matters of sports bodies, they are autonomous," Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Twitter.

"But when the issue is related to the country's sentiments, then the interest of the nation has to be kept in mind. I urge the BCCI to take appropriate steps on the issue."

The BCCI said it has already written to the world governing body for cricket seeking permission for Dhoni to sport the insignia.

The controversy has prompted passionate responses from both ruling and opposition politicians, Bollywood stars, as well as common citizens. #DhoniKeepTheGlove is the most trending hashtag on Twitter India.

Fawad Chaudhry, a federal minister in Pakistan, said Dhoni was in England to play cricket, not for any war.

In an unusually strong display of patriotic fervour in sport, Dhoni and his team members wore army camouflage-style caps in a one-day match against Australia in March to show their solidarity with Indian paramilitary police killed in a militant attack by a Pakistan-based group.

The team, led by Virat Kohli, also donated their earnings from that match to the families of the defence personnel who died on duty. REUTERS

Taifa Star need to work hard in AFCON finals- Amunike



Taifa Stars players in a group picture at the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The squad travelled to Egypt for final drills for the 2019 AFCON finals. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TFF

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TAIFA Stars' coach, Amunike, has disclosed his players need to be disciplined and work hard if they are to get good results in the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals, slated to take place in Egypt from June 21 to July 19.

The Nigerian tactician noted he has no doubt about his team's ability to excel in the continental tournament, should the side showcase commitment and winning mentality.

"We are confident that if we believe in ourselves as a team, if we do what is right, if the players are committed, I think we will pull positive results in Egypt, I'm not having any doubt about that," he noted.

Amunike pointed out a provisional squad consisting of 32 players was expected to travel to Egypt yesterday for final preparations for the continental showpiece and the players will be trimmed to 23 who will make the final squad.

"We, though, are also aware that for you to achieve success in life there has to be discipline, dedication, commitment...I'm happy with the players, we are going with 32 players," he disclosed.

The coach noted the team will participate in two international friendly matches in Egypt, in which the squad will lock horns with Egypt on June 13 and Zimbabwe on June 16.

He noted he and the rest of the technical bench will have another week for assessing the side and thereafter unveil the squad, consisting of 23 players, which will represent the country in the tournament.

The provisional squad is made up of keepers Aishi Manula (Simba), Metacha Mnata (Mbao FC), Suleiman Salula (Malindi), and Aron Kalambo (Prisons), defenders Hassan Kessy (Nkana,

Zambia) Vincent Mayomba (Mbao FC), Gadiel Michael (Yanga) and Abdi Banda (Baroka FC, South Africa).

Ally Mtoni (Lipuli FC), Mohamed Hussein (Simba), Aggrey Morris (Azam FC), Erasto Nyoni (Simba), David Mwantika (Azam FC), Claryo Boniface (National U-18 team) and Kelvin Yondani (Yanga) and midfielder Feisal Salum (Yanga) are also in the squad.

Other midfielders, Mudathir Yahya (Azam FC), Shiza Kichuya (ENPPI, Egypt), Farid Mussa (Tenerife, Spain), Simon Msuva (Difaa el Jadida, Morocco), Miraji Athuman (Lipuli FC), Fred Tanguu (Lipuli FC) Himid Mao (Petrojet, Egypt) and Frank Domayo (Azam FC).

Forwards Yahya Zayd (Ismaily, Egypt), Adi Yusuf (Blackpool, England), Kelvin John (National U-17 team), Mbwana Samatta

(KRC Genk, Belgium), Thomas Ulimwengu (JS Saoura, Algeria), Shaaban Iddi (Tenerife, Spain), John Bocco (Simba) and Rashid Mandawa (BDF, Botswana) also make the list.

Amunike noted he took performance and discipline into consideration before opting to drop seven players, Jonas Mkude (Simba), Ibrahim Ajibu (Yanga), Ayoub Lyanga (Coastal Union), Kennedy Wilson (Singida United), Kassim Hamisi (Kagera Sugar), Ally Ally (KMC FC) and Shomari Kapombe (Simba) from the provisional squad that is travelling to Egypt.

Taifa Stars are in Group C of the continental showdown with continental big guns, Algeria and Senegal, as well as East Africa neighbours, Kenya.

The Tanzania squad will confront Senegal on June 23 and the former will then play Kenya on

June 27. Taifa Stars will wrap up the group stage by confronting Algeria on July 1.

The Egypt showpiece will be the second for Taifa Stars. The side made its maiden appearance in the continental competition in 1980.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam on Thursday when Taifa Stars received the national flag from the Deputy Minister for Information, Culture, Arts and Sports Juliana Shonza, the side's skipper, Mbwana Samatta, assured Tanzanians that they are going to Egypt to compete, not simply making numbers.

He asked all Tanzanians to have faith in the team.

"Many people are writing us off, they say we are underdogs, but let me assure you all that we are ready for the finals and we ready to fight for our country," he said.

Simba opt out of Kagame Cup

By Guardian Reporter

THE 2018/19 Mainland Premier League champions, Simba, have said they will not compete in the 2019 Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) Kagame Cup, which is slated for next month in Rwanda.

Crescentius Magori, Simba SC Chief Executive Officer, noted his club has reached the decision as it has little time to prepare for the competition.

A section of the club's players, the official noted, have joined the senior national squad, Taifa Stars, which will compete in the AFCON finals in Egypt.

The Simba players, according to the official, will have little to train with their team mates once they make their way back to Dar es Salaam.

Magori noted Simba have targeted to set up a six-week camp outside the country with the aim of excelling in the 2019/2020 CAF Champions League.

This year's Kagame Cup fixture thus,

will disrupt Simba's plans.

"We have planned a six-week pre-season training given we have set our sight on performing well in the CAF Champions League," he noted.

He disclosed Simba have already written the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) to notify the latter on the club's move.

Domestic football big guns, Yanga, have also confirmed to have received invitation letter from CECAFA to take part in the competition.

Yanga acting secretary general, Omary Kaaya, noted the outfit is still discussing the invitation and evaluating the benefits of participation in the tournament before issuing their statement on the issue.

Kagame Cup defending champions, Azam FC, are so far the only side from Tanzania which has confirmed to take part in the competition.

The outfit has disclosed it will training on June 20 to prepare for the tournament and will jet off to Rwanda on July 4.



Simba SC Chief Executive Officer, Crescentius Magori.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

